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LE COMTE DE SÉGUR.

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**MEMOIRS**  
  
**AND**  
  
**RECOLLECTIONS**

**OF**  
  
**COUNT SEGUR,**

**AMBASSADOR FROM FRANCE**  
  
**TO THE COURTS OF RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA,**  
  
**&c. &c.**

**WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.**

**LONDON:**  
  
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Paris le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1824

Vous m'assurez, Monsieur, qu'un grand nombre de vos souscripteurs, en différents pays, vous ont demandé de placer dans l'édition que vous faites de mes œuvres, un fac Simile de ma mauvaise écriture; je n'ai point acquis assez de célébrité pour m'être attendu à cette demande. ce qui me l'explique cependant; c'est la mode qui s'est depuis peu établie de vouloir partout des fac simile, dans les livres comme dans les Album. la mode est une puissance capricieuse, à laquelle on ne résiste pas impunément, et puisque vous vous crovez obligé de lui obéir, je ne veux pas vous contrarier sur un point si peu important. D'ailleurs, quand j'expose mes écrits aux rigueurs de la Critique, à plus forte raison ne dois-je pas craindre d'y exposer mon écriture, puisse-t-elle avoir pour moi l'avantage de la queue du bécot d'Alcibiade, et détourner sur elle une partie de la censure rigide, à laquelle, quoiqu'on fasse, il est impossible d'échapper. faites donc, Monsieur, de ce peu de lignes, l'usage qui vous conviendra.

J'ai l'honneur de vous Saluer

Le C<sup>te</sup> de Ségur



# MEMOIRS,

AND

## RECOLLECTIONS.

---

YOUTH wishes to know what age has seen and done, and age is fond of relating it. Nothing is more natural ; and it would therefore be unreasonable to feel surprised that, in the present day, so many Memoirs are published, so many personages described, so many anecdotes related.

No period ever offered to public curiosity more legitimate subjects of excitement than that in which we live. It occurs after an age the most fertile in storms, and during the course of which institutions, politics, philosophy, opinions, laws, customs, fortunes, fashions, and manners, have all undergone a total change.

The existence of each State has been but a series of revolutions ; the life of each man, like a novel, has been full of adventures ; and the whole period offers the aspect of a varied collection of paintings, exhibiting numerous portraits,

historical pictures, representations of scenes of life, and sometimes of ludicrous adventures and metamorphoses.

Escaped from the wreck, and safely arrived in the port, we love to recollect calmly the storms that have assailed us; to retrace to ourselves and relate to our friends, and even to the public, the share assigned to us by fate, in so many passions, events and vicissitudes.

Thus to recal past sensations is to retrace our steps towards youth, and almost to recommence life anew: it is a last pleasure, which we enjoy the more from the consideration that our experience may serve to instruct those who have none.

The last ray of light shed by the mind of a man at the close of existence, may sometimes serve as a useful beacon to guide the youth entering upon his career.

Several of my friends have often urged me to write what they had heard me relate, and I now comply with their request.

In perusing these fragments of Memoirs, or rather these Recollections and Anecdotes, it will be seen that my object has not been to produce an historical picture, but to trace a moral sketch of the times in which I have lived.

I have hoped to satisfy the curiosity of the reader, but not to gratify his malignity. No food for scandal or for the passions will be found in these pages; but I have wished that their perusal might prove entertaining and inte-

resting to the lovers of truth, and to those who seek, with moderation, to trace the true, though often slight causes of the great events they have witnessed.

My position, my birth, the ties of friendship and consanguinity, which connected me with all the remarkable personages of the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI, my father's administration, my travels in America, my negotiations in Russia and in Prussia, the advantage of having been engaged in intercourse of affairs and society with Catherine II, Frederick the Great, Potemkin, Joseph II, Gustavus III, Washington, Kosciusko, La Fayette, Nassau, Mirabeau, Napoleon, as well as with the chiefs of the aristocratical and democratical parties, and the most illustrious writers of my times—all that I have seen, done, experienced, and suffered during the revolution—those strange alternations of prosperity and misfortune, of credit and disgrace, of enjoyments and proscriptions, of opulence and poverty—all the different occupations which I have been forced to apply to, and the various conditions of life in which fate has placed me—have induced me to believe that this sketch of my life would prove entertaining and interesting—chance having made me successively a *Colonel*, a *General Officer*, a *Traveller*, a *Navigator*, a *Courtier*, the son of a *Minister*, an *Ambassador*, a *Negotiator*, a *Prisoner*, an *Agriculturist*, a *Soldier*, an *Elector*, a *Poet*, a *Dramatic Author*, a *Contributor to Newspapers*, an *Essayist*, an *Historian*, a *Deputy*, a

*Councillor of State, a Senator, an Academician, and a Peer of France.*

I must have seen men and things under almost every aspect, sometimes through the prism of happiness, sometimes through the crape of adversity, and at a later period by the light of a mild philosophy.

I only intend to publish, for the present, that part of my Memoirs or Recollections and Anecdotes which relates to my voyage to America and my mission to Russia, and which I shall merely preface by a few of the recollections of my youthful days ; and by a sketch of the manners and opinions of the court and of Paris, as I saw them at the period of my entrance into the world.

In writing history an author must so completely keep himself out of view, that the reader may be left in doubt as to the time in which he lived, the part he acted, and the party to which he inclined. But when a man writes his own memoirs and embodies the recollections of his life, he must necessarily speak of himself and of his family, for that family is the first element in which he lived, and the first horizon he discovered. However as this is, in my opinion, the inconvenience of writings of this nature, and the rock upon which their authors split, since what is only interesting to ourselves is likely to prove tedious for every body else, I shall be as sober and sparing in that respect as possible.

Descended from a noble, ancient and military family, I belong to a branch of that house long

since established in Perigord. My family professed the protestant religion to which it remained for a considerable time warmly attached; and it therefore suffered severely during the civil wars, and was excluded from all the favors which the court bestowed upon the catholics.

One of my ancestors, who had been the companion of Henry the IVth in his youthful days, and who had been exposed to imminent danger on the day of St. Barthelemy, was honored by the friendship of that prince, who appointed him to be his ambassador at the court of several princes of Germany. But after the death of that monarch, all royal favor was withdrawn from us, and as my family was divided into several branches, they all became poor.

My great grand-father however restored our fortune. Having distinguished himself during the war, he became a general officer, had one of his legs carried off, and obtained the *cordon rouge* (order of St. Louis.)

His son the Count de Segur, my grand-father, was a distinguished military character. He commanded the corps destined to support the elector of Bavaria, Charles the VIIth, and was taken prisoner at Lintz by the Austrians.

He was at the time bitterly and unjustly accused of having imprudently exposed himself to that disaster. The king of Prussia, Frederick the Great, in his Memoirs, addresses him some very animated reproaches on the subject, because this misfortune had increased the personal em-

barassments of that monarch. But my grandfather, abandoned by the Bavarians, and obliged by superior orders to remain in a position that was open and untenable, could he with ten thousand men oppose all the forces of Austria? The court of France more impartial and more likely to be well informed on the subject, approved of his conduct, and marshal de Belle-Isle, whose opinion is of very great weight, passed the most honorable encomiums upon him.

He increased his reputation during the obstinate defense of Prague, and covered himself with glory by his skilful and celebrated retreat of Pfafenhoffen, which he effected with ten thousand men over an extent of fifty leagues, without ever suffering his line to be broken, although he had to contend with the whole army of the Emperor. He was rewarded for this memorable action, which was, at the time, compared with the retreat of the Ten Thousand, by the command of the three bishoprics and by the *cordou bleu* (order of the Holy-Ghost.)

His merit had given him reputation, favors and places; but his only patrimony consisted in two small estates in Perigord. The Duke of Orleans, regent of France, had promised him the situation of first equerry to the King; but the Duke died of apoplexy as he was on his way to the apartment of the young monarch, to lay the appointment before him for his sign manual.

My father, the Marquis de Ségur, relied less upon the favor of princes, and calculated more

wisely. Already distinguished at the age of twenty-two, a colonel and decorated with two honorable wounds, he made himself agreeable to a young and handsome lady Mlle. de Vernon, a native of St. Domingo, and married her. She had an estate producing one hundred and twenty thousand livres a year, which enabled my father to live at court and at the army in a style suitable to the rank derived from his birth, the services of his father and his own.

Louis XV gave him the *cordon bleu*, appointed him governor of the province of Foix, and continued to him the situation of lieutenant-general of Brie and Champagne, which the Regent had obtained for his father.

I should have a great deal to say, if, in obedience to the dictates of my heart, I were to enter into the details of the glorious life of my father; but the preface would then be longer than the work. I am writing my own Recollections, and I only disclose those particularities concerning my family, which I consider as indispensable preliminaries. With respect to my father, therefore, I think it will be sufficient to repeat here what I said of him in a rapid sketch, which I published on the very day on which I had the misfortune of losing him.

Philippe Henri de Segur distinguished himself whilst yet very young in the wars of Bohemia and Italy; and was particularly remarked for the courage he displayed during the siege of Prague. At the age of nineteen he was promoted to the rank of

colonel, and at the battle of Rocoux a musket ball entered his chest and perforated it through and through. At the battle of Lawfeld, whilst endeavouring to bring back to the charge his regiment which had been three times repulsed, he had his arm broken ; and fearing lest his absence should damp the courage of his soldiers, he continued to advance, forced the intrenchments and did not leave his post until after the victory. Louis XV, who was an eye witness to this action, said to my grand-father these words quoted by Voltaire: *Men like your son deserve to be invulnerable.*

His advancement kept pace with his services, and he was rapidly promoted to the ranks of *maréchal-de-camp* and lieutenant-general. He saved a division of the army at Varbourg, and brought back to the Duke de Brissac, near Minden, ten thousand men of infantry which the Duke considered as lost, and who had fought against thirty thousand of the enemy during five hours without being broken.

At Clostercamp he received a thrust from a bayonet in the neck, and three sabre cuts on the head, and was taken prisoner after having opposed an obstinate resistance to the grenadiers, by which he was surrounded. After the conclusion of peace, he was appointed inspector-general of infantry, and secured to himself the confidence of ministers by his activity, and the esteem of the army by his firmness.

He was afterwards intrusted with the com-



mand of the Franche-Comté. This was a difficult post : for the parliaments and the authorities, the citizens and the military of that province, had always been quarrelling together. My father's justice and wisdom, his conciliating spirit, and above all his frankness restored harmony and tranquillity amongst them

Louis XVI placed him in the administration in 1780 as minister of war, and created him *maréchal de France*, in 1783. He was seven years minister, during which period he re-established the discipline of the army, and introduced order in its finances. The soldiers were indebted to him for the comfort of being no longer obliged to be crowded three together in one bed. His ordinance respecting the hospitals, a perfect model of its kind, proves to what extent he carried his endeavours to improve, in all its details, that branch too much neglected of military administration. It was he who conceived the idea of a staff-corps in the army, an institution to which we perhaps owe a great part of the talents and exploits which have since shed such lustre over France.

He retired from the administration when Cardinal de Loménie and intrigue began to preside over the councils, and from that period lived in modest retirement in the bosom of his family. The storms of the revolution deprived him of all his fortune which consisted in pensions, and in the titles and marks of distinctions which he had purchased with his blood. The convention, after

having reduced him to misery, carried rigorous injustice so far, as to order his furniture to be publicly sold. This respectable warrior then came and sought an asylum in my arms, and in spite of my poverty, I considered the happiness of supplying his wants as a favor of fortune.

At the age of seventy, poor, infirm, tormented by gout, and deprived of one of his arms, he was confined in the *Force*. I was also arrested, but without being able to share his confinement, for neither his children nor his servant could obtain permission to remain in the same prison with him. The courage he had displayed in dangers, did not forsake him, in adversity, and the wisdom of his language, the simplicity of his demeanor, the calm serenity of his mind which had caused him to be respected, when at the summit of grandeur, remained unchanged.

He fortunately escaped the fatal end to which all were then consigned, tyranny spared him, because he had nothing left which could tempt its avidity. The last days of his life were tranquil: the first consul informed of the situation of this old and respectable warrior, who, by placing him at the military school, had opened for him the career of glory, provided for the comfort of the end of his existence. During the last year of his life, his sufferings were great, but he never uttered a single complaint, and died as he had lived, master of himself, and struggling as calmly against pain as against adversity.

He was powerful and never committed a

single act of injustice, the victim of oppression, and preserved the same attachment for his country. A good father, a kind husband, a skilful general, a brave soldier, a minister just and wise, an excellent citizen : his memory must be cherished by the army and by all Frenchmen. He died at Paris on the 8th of October 1801.

---

Chance almost always exercises a greater influence over our fate than our calculations and propensities. I recollect, that the Maréchal de Castries, one of the men the most known for having sought all his life to fix fortune by deep and learned combinations, told me, whilst I was with him in Britany as his aid-de-camp, that, during the course of his brilliant career, the caprice of fate had often defeated his most prudent calculations; and that he owed the greatest part of his success and the accomplishment of the hopes of his ambition to unforeseen chances, to events which it would have been out of his power to guess, and sometimes, added he laughing, to faults.

Experience has proved to me the justness of this observation which numerous facts have confirmed. If this truth were maturely considered, it would dispose men to be more indulgent towards one another, and render them more modest in prosperity, more patient in adversity; for, in the labyrinth of this world the road we follow, the circumstances which direct our course, the issue

we find, and the goal we arrive at, depend upon an infinity of trifling causes, over which neither our foresight, nor our will exercise any influence.

Born with a lively imagination, in the midst of a court and an age which thought more of pleasures than affairs, of literature than politics, of the intrigues of society than of the interests of the people; passionately fond of poetry, and of that new philosophy which, upheld by the brilliant arms of the most acute wits and the finest geniuses, seemed destined to secure the triumph of reason; hurried away by the vortex of a world vain, frivolous, witty, and gallant, I found myself suddenly compelled, by the elevation of my father to the situation of minister of war, to make a very different use of my time; to apply to public business, to abandon the frivolity of the saloons for the more serious affairs of the cabinet, and to rectify, by a knowledge of men and by the evidence of facts, the too frequent errors of a spirit of system, and of theories not founded upon experience.

My family, for many centuries past, had always embraced a military career, and military glory was therefore the sole object of my ambition. As my father, esteemed in the army and covered with honorable wounds, was then minister of war, and became some time afterwards *maréchal de France*, fortune, seconding my wishes, seemed to offer me, in the possession of arms, an easy path, and brilliant prospects.

It was, however, that very situation which,

giving in spite of myself another direction to my destiny, changed my fate, and opposed my inclination, by removing me from the army, and placing me in a diplomatic career, which was not congenial either to my taste, or to the very lively frankness of my disposition.

The ardent desire I felt to be engaged in active warfare induced me to proceed to America; and it was precisely this military excursion, of which I shall give some account, which became the cause of the change that occurred in my destiny. Some letters, which I wrote respecting the revolution operated in the United States, and respecting that which the disposition of minds in South America enabled me to foresee and foretell, were read at Versailles, in the King's council, by the Count de Vergennes, minister for foreign affairs. The Count, from that moment, resolved to take me into his department, and, on my return from America, he advised the King to appoint me minister plenipotentiary at the court of Russia.

Before I relate what I have seen and done in that empire, so recently known amongst the European monarchies, and which has, in a short time, become so formidable and so colossal, I think it right to speak of my rapid excursion in America, having, in the space of a few months, quickly passed from the most burning zones to the coldest countries of the globe; and having successively seen the two opposite foci of despotism and liberty, rival giants who are now waging against each other a war of extermination, of

which the whole world is the theatre, and of which nations will long be the victims, whatever its issue may be.

Born in 1753, my infancy, and the early days of my youth, passed under the reign of Louis XV. This good, but weak monarch was, in his youth, the object of an enthusiasm which was too little deserved ; and in his old age, of severe reproaches which were equally exaggerated. Heir to the absolute power of Louis XIV, he reigned sixty years without having been accused of a single act of cruelty, a fact very rare, and for that reason very remarkable in the annals of arbitrary power.

The first years of his reign were distinguished by the victories of Rocoux, Lawfeld, and Fontenoy ; but he was merely present at these battles, which were decided, fought, and won by his generals.

Holding the reins of the state with a weak hand, he was ever governed either by his ministers or his mistresses. The Duke of Orleans, regent of France, the Cardinal Dubois, the Duke de Bourbon, and the Cardinal de Fleury, governed the state for a long time in his name.

The disorder of the finances, caused by the ambition of Louis XIV, and increased by the follies into which the scotchman Law led the regent, cannot reasonably be laid to his charge ; and his infancy must equally shelter him from the blame due to the excessive licentiousness which prevailed during the time of the regency.

Indeed, that licentiousness may, in some degree, explain or excuse his excessive passion for women, and the shameful debaucheries which tarnished his life ; for there never did exist any prince who did not participate more or less in the errors and weaknesses of his age. Besides, the French have always shewn too little severity for failings of this description ; but they require, at least, that these spots should disappear in the brilliant rays of some redeeming glory, and then they are too indulgent, and almost become the panegyrists for the *chevaleresque* Francis I, the brave Henry IV, and the majestic Louis XIV, of those errors with which they bitterly reproach the weak Louis XV.

The long and peaceful period of Cardinal Fleury's administration, allowed France to enjoy that internal repose of which she stood in need, healed some of her wounds, and gained for the monarch the affection of the people.

The moderation of the government even gave some appearance of liberty to subjection. The theological quarrels still preserved a kind of vivacity ; the jansenists and the molinists still divided all minds ; but by degrees these quarrels were attacked by the invincible weapons of ridicule, wielded against them by a philosophy whose march and progress the government vainly endeavoured to arrest or retard.

The facility of manners furnished numerous means by which the severity of the laws might be eluded : the acts of rigour of the parliaments against philosophical writings, produced no other

effect than to cause them to be sought after and read with a greater degree of avidity. Public opinion became a power of opposition which triumphed over every obstacle: the condemnation of a book was a title to consideration for its author; and under the reign of an absolute King, liberty having become a fashion in the capital, exercised a greater sway in it than the monarch himself.

The warlike disposition of the French nation found but a feeble diversion from that spirit of innovation in the seven years' war; a war undertaken without cause, conducted without skill, and terminated without success. The French, however, by their personal courage, upheld the glory of our arms, and several generals, such as Marshals d'Estrées and de Broglie, acquired a just celebrity. M. de Castries, M. de Rochambeau, and my father, who was already covered with wounds, distinguished themselves by noble actions, and thus deserved, by anticipation, the staff of Marshal, which was given to them in the following reign.

The genius of Frederick the Great, and the superiority of the naval forces of Great Britain, seconded by the faults of the French administration, triumphed at last over the united efforts of Russia, Austria, and France. We were compelled, in 1763, to conclude a disastrous peace, by which we lost great and rich colonies, and to submit to the humiliating condition of allowing an English commissioner to reside in Dunkirk to



watch over the execution of that clause of the treaty which forbade our rebuilding the fortifications of that town.

The wound inflicted by these reverses upon our national pride were deep and severe. The illusions of hope had bestowed upon the King, in his youth, the title of *Beloved*; but being now beaten, he lost it. Popular opinion changes with fortune, and this ought not to excite surprise: men love, despise, or hate power, according to the good or evil which they receive from it; and they often lavish, without measure, their admiration upon success, and their contempt upon reverses.

The end of the reign of this monarch was obscured by inglorious idleness. His indolence and weakness allowed all the springs of the state to unbend. Power was still arbitrary, and yet authority lost its influence; public opinion escaped despotism by railing against it: we did not possess liberty but licence.

The King preferring repose to dignity, and even the most abject voluptuousness to love, languished enslaved in the arms of a courtesan, a tie the more disgraceful as, so far from being kept concealed, it was publicly acknowledged, and degraded the court by the presentation of such a mistress.

The brilliant and high-minded Duke de Choiseul was completely foiled by so worthless an adversary. He had replied by a noble disdain to the advances of the favorite, and she obtained his exile; but he was consoled by public opinion,

which, displaying for the first time signs of existence and liberty, forsook the palace of the prince, and formed a court in the retreat of a disgraced minister.

All prohibition proved ineffectual ; and the King, almost isolated in the apartment of his mistress, saw with surprise all the nobility and ladies of the court, who formerly surrounded him with their homages, become, by a singular metamorphosis, the courtiers of disgrace and misfortunes.

A pillar erected at Chanteloup, upon which were inscribed the names of the numerous persons who visited that place of banishment, served as a monument to this new *fronde*.\* The impressions of youth are very strong ; and I never shall forget that which I derived from the pleasure of seeing my father's name and my own upon that pillar of opposition, the forerunner of other acts of resistance, which afterwards assumed a character of such serious importance.

The Duke d'Aiguillon, and the ministers named according to the pleasure of the King's mistress, were all men of talent. Compelled, however, to submit to the caprices of Madame du Barry, in order to preserve their influence, they were lowered and rendered ridiculous by such a protection ; so that, in proportion as their power increased, they lost in public estimation.

The King was ready to purchase tranquillity at any price ; the courtiers to receive money at all

\* A party opposed to the court under the minority of Louis XIV.

times. Any bold conceptions, vast projects, or noble inspirations, would have disturbed and distressed the old monarch and his young mistress; and the natural consequence of such a state of things was, the loss of all dignity in the government, of all order in the finances, and of all firmness in our political relations. France ceased to exercise any influence in Europe; England quietly commanded on the ocean, and made an easy conquest of India; the northern powers divided Poland amongst them, and the balance of power, established by the peace of Westphalia, was thus destroyed.

The French monarchy descended from the first rank to make room for the Empress Catherine II, sovereign of that Muscovy heretofore almost unknown under the sway of its Czars. This empire, recently emerged from barbarism, owing to the genius of Peter the Great, after having been so long classed in public opinion amongst the uncivilised tribes of Asia, became, in the space of half a century, at first through our own indolence, and afterwards through our own rashness, a colossal power, whose weight now threatens the independence of every nation throughout the whole world.

French pride was wounded and roused by the shame attached to this royal lethargy, to this political decline, to this monarchical degradation. From one extremity of the kingdom to the other, it became a point of honor to belong to the opposition; by exalted minds it was considered as a duty; by men of correct principles as a virtue;

by philosophers as a useful weapon wherewith to fight for the recovery of liberty ; it afforded, in short, the means of shining, and was a fashion, as it were, which young men eagerly adopted.

The parliaments made remonstrances ; the clergy preached sermons ; philosophers wrote books ; young courtiers composed epigrams. Every one felt that the helm was directed by unskilful hands, and braved a government which had forfeited all claims to confidence or respect ; and as private ambitions were no longer effectually restrained by the exhausted energies of power, they each took their flight, and, without any previous concert, directed their courses to the same object with different views.

The old nobility, ashamed of being enslaved by a mistress of an inferior class, and by an inglorious administration, regretted the feudal times, and the power they had lost since the days of Richelieu. The clergy bitterly deplored the loss of that influence which they had exercised under the reign of Madame de Maintenon. The higher magistracy opposed to arbitrary power, and to the delapidation of the finances, a resistance which secured them popularity.

Every thing seemed to breathe the spirit of the *league* and of the *fronde* ; and as public opinion, when it seeks to manifest itself, requires a rallying point—a sort of standard, this was supplied by the philosophers. The words *liberty*, *property*, *equality*, were uttered. These magical sounds were re-echoed in every direction, and enthusi-

astically so by those who afterwards considered them as the origin of all their misfortunes.

Nobody dreamed of a revolution, although it was rapidly effecting itself in public opinion. Montesquieu had brought to light once more the titles of nations to their original privileges, which had so long remained involved in darkness. The laws of England were studied and envied by men of a mature age ; English horses and jockeys, boots and coats after the English fashion, could alone suit the fancy of young men.

All prejudices were assailed at once by the keen and sparkling wit of Voltaire, by the eloquent logic of Rousseau, by the encyclopedian stores of d'Alembert and of Diderot, by the violent declamations of Raynal ; and whilst this splendid assemblage of knowledge was operating a sudden change in the manners, every class of the old social order, undermined without suspecting it, still preserved its native pride, its apparent splendor, its antiquated distinctions, and all the signs of power. They resembled, in this respect, those brilliant paintings produced by a multitude of colours, and delineated with sand upon the glasses of our banquets, in which we admire magnificent castles, cheerful landscapes, and abundant harvests : the slightest breath is sufficient to efface every trace of their existence.

The government, exposed to so many attacks from every quarter, began at last to wake from its slumbers ; and, with the violence which always characterises irritated weakness, it resorted

to the rash measure of exiling and dissolving all the parliaments : this was actually laying the axe to the most solid foundations of the old social edifice, and depriving itself, in so dangerous a crisis, of its firmest support.

The hatred against authority was increased by this proceeding : the expelled parliaments seemed to be followed in their exile by the national feeling, and no consideration attached to those which succeeded them. The throne ceased to be an object of respect ; that respect, together with the hopes of the public, were henceforth directed to that part only of the palace where the young Dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI, and his consort, Marie-Antoinette of Austria, resided in peaceable retirement.

Concentrating in themselves royal dignity, public and private virtues, and the love of the people's welfare, they presented, by the correctness of their manners, an astonishing contrast with the licentiousness which an audacious courtesan had introduced into the rest of the court ; the contagion of vice dared not approach that asylum of decency.

In them every one reposed the fondest hopes of a happier destiny for our country. Alas ! who could foresee that two beings, who seemed formed by Providence to secure and enjoy our happiness, would one day become victims of the caprice of fortune, and fall under the blows of the most violent and the most sanguinary anarchy.

Having, at that time, been lately presented at court, and favorably received by the Dauphin and Dauphiness, I formed one of the brilliant and youthful circle which surrounded them. Was it possible then, to apprehend that the dawn of this smiling day would so soon be obscured by such dreadful and violent storms !

The old social edifice was entirely undermined in its deepest foundations, although the surface shewed no symptoms which could indicate its approaching ruin. The change in manners was imperceptible, for it had been gradual : the etiquette of the court was unchanged ; it exhibited the same throne, the same names, the same distinctions of rank, and the same forms.

The town followed the example of the court. Ancient usage had placed between the nobility and the middling classes an immense interval, which was only to be got over by talents of the highest order, and even then more in appearance than in reality : the intercourse was rather familiar than upon terms of equality.

The parliaments, by braving absolute power, though adhering to respectful forms, had unsuspectingly become almost republicans ; they were giving the signal for revolutions, whilst they conceived that they were only following the example of their predecessors, at the time of their opposition to the concordate of Francis I, and to the fiscal despotism of Cardinal Mazarin.

The heads of the ancient families of the no

bility, believing themselves as firm as the monarchy itself, slumbered in perfect security upon a volcano. The discharge of the duties of their situations, promotions, royal indifference or royal favors, the nomination or dismissal of ministers, engrossed all their attention, and formed the sole motives of their actions, and the only subjects of their conversation. As indifferent to the essential affairs of the state as to their own, they suffered the former to be governed by intendants of provinces, and the latter by their stewards; and the only events that excited their sorrow and contempt were the changes introduced in the costumes, the discontinuance of liveries, and the fancy for English coats and fashions.

The clergy, proud of their influence and wealth, were far from apprehending any danger to their existence; but they were exasperated at the boldness of philosophers; and, although some of the members of that body, by mixing too much in the world, participated, as it were, in the new customs, still, not content with directing their attacks against licentiousness, they vainly attempted to resist the introduction of truths, which the removal of darkness rendered evident to all; and persisted in upholding certain antiquated and childish superstitions, which had disappeared for ever before the light weapons of ridicule and the torch of reason.

As, however, all must feel the effects of the moral atmosphere of their age, the same clergy



had relented from those austerities which had thrown such a gloom over the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV; they suffered the persecuting edicts against protestants, which had occasioned so much disgrace, and so much injury to France, as well as their furious debates respecting Molina and Jansenius, to fall into disuse.

With respect to us, the young French nobility, we felt no regret for the past, no anxiety for the future, and gaily trod a soil bedecked with flowers, which concealed a precipice from our sight. Merry censurers of old fashions, of the feudal pride of our ancestors, and of their grave etiquette, whatever partook of antiquity appeared to us ridiculous and troublesome. The gravity of ancient doctrines was irksome to us. We were equally attracted and entertained by the pleasing philosophy of Voltaire; and, without searching into that professed by graver writers, we admired it as bearing the impress of courage, and of resistance to arbitrary power.

We were delighted with the new fashion for gigs and coats, and with the simplicity of English customs, which enabled us to discard all troublesome display of the details of our private life. We devoted all our time to the society, *fêtes*, pleasures, and easy duties of the court and the garrisons; and, free from all care, we enjoyed the advantages which old institutions had handed

down to us, together with the liberty which new customs had introduced : thus our vanity was gratified by one of these systems, whilst our inclination for pleasures derived equal gratification from the other.

At our country seats we discovered amongst our peasantry, and the petty justices dependant upon us, some traces of our ancient feudal power ; at court, or in the world, we enjoyed the distinctions due to our birth : promoted to superior rank in the army by the sole influence of our name, and henceforward at liberty to mix without ostentation or restraint amongst our countrymen to taste the sweets of plebeian equality, the short years of our early life were gliding before us in the midst of illusions, and of a kind of happiness which had, I believe, never before fallen to the lot of any but ourselves. Liberty, royalty, aristocracy, democracy, prejudices, reason, novelty, philosophy, every thing concurred to render our days prosperous, and never did calmer slumbers or more engaging dreams, receive a more horrible termination.

The years of my infancy had elapsed during the latter part of the reign of Louis XV. I was not presented at court until three years before his death. Chance, however, had afforded me the opportunity of seeing and approaching him at a much earlier period. In 1767, the King had collected at Compiègne a camp of ten thousand men, for the exercise of great field manœuvres. My

father commanded those troops, and, although I was only fourteen years of age, he permitted me to follow him as his aide-de-camp.

After the reviews and manœuvres, the King did my father the honor of coming to sup with him. Usage required that the person, who received the monarch at his table, should stand behind his chair and serve him. My father was about to conform to this etiquette; but Louis XV said to him: "You have served me long enough in war to be entitled to rest during peace; sit down near me; your son will serve me."

I took the plate and napkin, as will be readily believed, and stationed myself behind the King with the vivacity of a childish joy, which will certainly astonish no one; for, ever since the downfall of liberty in the Roman Empire, the private service of the prince has been considered an honor in every modern monarchy; it has been styled an *office*, a *high office*, and princes of the royal family help the king to put on his shirt.

The titles of gentleman of the horse, of master of the horse, of steward, of keeper of the wardrobe, bear testimony to the strength and duration of customs that have been renewed from the ancient oriental monarchies, and which have so effectually resisted the encroachments of philosophy, as to be still seen in full force in that proud and free country, England, where the personal service required by the sovereign, whose

hands have almost always been fettered, is performed by attendants on their knees.

The King often addressed himself to me during this repast; I recollect that he said to me amongst other things: "You will be fortunate in war." I replied, "That all I wished for, was to have it soon in my power to prove the correctness of his prediction." "It is quite certain," rejoined he, "you belong to a family which has always had alternate chances of good and bad fortune. For many generations back it has always happened that one of your ancestors has been wounded, and his son has come safe and sound out of every engagement; at a later period, again, your great grandfather lost a leg in war; your grandfather fought all his life and escaped unhurt; your father is covered with wounds: so that the fortunate chance falls upon you."

At the conclusion of dinner, he asked me the hour: I replied that I could not tell, as I had no watch. "Segur," said he to my father, "give your watch to your son instantly." It would, perhaps, have been more natural that he should have given me his own; this Prince, however, sent me on the following day two handsome horses out of his own stables, and this was assuredly the most agreeable present that could be received at my age.

I often recollect an expression that escaped a grenadier during this repast, and which made a strong

impression on my mind. The table was laid out under an immense tent ; it held about one hundred covers : the dishes were brought in by grenadiers. The delicacy of the Prince's organs was shocked by the smell that proceeded from these soldiers, in a warm and confined room. " These " good people," said he, rather loudly, " smell " strongly of the socks." " No doubt," bluntly replied a grenadier, " because we have none to " wear." A deep silence followed this reply.

Previously to the breaking up of the camp, a deserter, who had been brought before a council of war, was condemned to death : such was the existing law. My mother hastened to throw herself at the King's feet, and obtained a revocation of the sentence. Sedaine told me it was on the occasion of this event that he afterwards wrote the opera of the *Deserter*, of which Monsigny composed the music.

A recollection of a very different kind, a fatal recollection, has remained deeply engraven in my memory. At the time of the marriage of Louis XVI with Marie-Antoinette of Austria, my tutor took me with my brother to the scaffolding erected in the place Louis XV, in order that we might have a view of the fireworks to be let off along the banks of the river.

After the fireworks, the immense crowd that filled the place Louis XV and the Champs-Élysées, attempted to go in a body towards the Boulevard, where a brilliant illumination was displayed. Owing to a strange concurrence of mistakes and neglect, deep trenches had been left

uncovered, in the rue Royale, by the men who were working to complete the colonnades.

Numberless lines of carriages, arriving from both extremities of the rue Saint-Honoré, obstructed all communication from the place Louis XV to the Boulevard.

No precaution had been taken to guard against this confusion ; the police officers were not in sufficient numbers to offer any resistance. The Mayor of Paris, actuated by a parsimonious feeling, had refused a thousand crowns which were demanded by Marshal de Biron with the view of confiding public safety to the French guards. A multitude of pickpockets, ready to avail themselves of this circumstance, collected together, and impeded the progress of the people who were advancing in crowds along the rue Royale.

In the midst of this confusion, which was rapidly augmented by terror, many persons unavoidably fell into the open trenches. Other victims fell upon them ; as the multitude constantly increased in a passage to which there was no egress, they were soon crowded together, crushed, thrown down, and smothered.

The first authors of this tumult, villains loaded with plunder, perished, likewise, on the spot, after having robbed the men of their purses and watches, and the women of their diamonds, and of every other object of value. Six hundred persons died on this sanguinary arena ; a nearly equal number of wounded and of dying, owed

their preservation to the tardy assistance afforded to them.

Methinks I still hear the cries of women, of old men, of children, who were perishing together heaped upon each other: a horrid catastrophe which cost the lives of so many victims, and which would have been held by a more superstitious age as a sure forerunner of the dreadful misfortunes that awaited the youthful couple whose hymen had just been celebrated under such sanguinary auspices.

There are some extraordinary and casual coincidences which seem to afford an excuse for weakness and credulity: how can we avoid believing in presentiments, when it is recollected that the same place Louis XV, where all Paris flocking in festive gaiety, had been suddenly thrown into mourning, became, a few years afterwards, the horrible theatre upon which fell the heads of that august couple, and that this atrocious crime was committed on the very spot where the rejoicings for their hymen had been disturbed by so dreadful an occurrence!

This disaster spread consternation throughout Paris; but it was the means, at the same time, of augmenting the affections of the inhabitants for the Dauphin and the Dauphiness, who evinced the noblest sensibility, and the most active benevolence on this occasion.

Another event shortly afterwards struck my youthful mind, and furnished it with very serious reflexions in a court, and at an age when

sensations created but too many diversions from thinking.

In the month of April, 1774, as Louis XV was going to hunt, he met a funeral, and, being fond of asking questions, he approached the coffin, and enquired who it was they were going to bury. He was told it was a young girl who had died of the smallpox. Seized with a sudden fear, he returned to his palace, and was two days afterwards attacked with that cruel malady, the very name of which had alarmed him. The hand of death was upon him; his blood became corrupted; mortification ensued, and carried him off. His corpse, covered over with lime, was conveyed to Saint-Denis without any kind of ceremony; and, forty days afterwards, his funeral obsequies were performed, and he was placed with due solemnity in the tomb of his ancestors.

Dazzled, from my infancy, by the splendour of the throne, and the extent of the royal power, a witness of the apparent zeal, the affected ardour, the constant anxiety of courtiers, the perpetual homages which resembled a kind of worship, I could not refrain from shedding tears at the agony and death of the sovereign. What was my surprise, when, hastening to Versailles, I paced the palace, now quite alone, and observed in the town as well as in the gardens, a general indifference, and even a sort of joy in every countenance. The setting sun was forgotten; the worship of all was directed to the rising sun. The old monarch, though not yet in his



tomb, was already classed amongst his silent and motionless predecessors. His reign now belonged to a history gone by ; the thoughts of men were engaged upon the future : the old courtiers only dreamed of maintaining their influence under the new reign ; and the young courtiers of supplanting them.

A change of reign is the best antidote to court illusions ; they cease altogether : the heart loses its disguise ; the deceased king is no longer more than a man, and is often considered less than one. No scenic representation conveys a stronger morality with it, or one that gives rise to deeper reflection.

It falls to the lot of nations, as well as of individuals, to live in an almost perpetual state of suffering : nations, therefore, as well as invalids, like to vary their position ; they derive a hope of improvement from the change.

Every thing now appeared to justify such a hope : the throne was occupied by a young Prince who was already universally known by the goodness of his heart, the correctness of his mind, and the simplicity of his manners. He appeared to feel no other passion than that of discharging his duties, and rendering his people happy. Averse to ostentation, to luxury, to pride, and to flattery, it seemed as if heaven had modelled this King not for his court, but for his subjects.

The Queen Marie-Antoinette, endowed with all the charms of her sex, united to dignity of

deportment which commands respect, the grace that softens the pride of majesty. The expression of her features alone retained a degree of Austrian pride. Her manners and conversation were amiable, engaging, and truly French. Too much wearied perhaps with the etiquette to which her lady of honor, Madame de Mouchy, endeavoured to induce her to conform, she used too many efforts to free herself from its troublesome restraint in order to enjoy the sweets of private life ; she felt the want of an intercourse of friendship, a want very seldom experienced by persons in so elevated a station.

It was imprudent in her to listen too much to the dictates of her heart. The French, notwithstanding that levity of which they are accused, or perhaps as a consequence of that levity, soon cease to respect the authority which governs them, when they find it divested of a certain degree of gravity. They require that its benevolence should be characterised by a seriousness that will confine them within proper bounds and discard familiarity.

A young King, whose chief defect consisted in feeling too much diffidence in his own powers, and in being almost ashamed of the careless education he had received, and a Queen full of wit, but rather thoughtless and inexperienced, could, with difficulty, govern a nation, fickle, ardent and thirsting after glory and novelty, at a time when disorder prevailed in the finances, and agitation filled the public mind, and all

burned to avenge the disgrace of an unfortunate war, and to recover from the shame resulting from a voluptuous reign. A new philosophy disposed the nation to break through all those bonds which, owing to the weakness of an arbitrary government, and to an habitual licentiousness of public morals, it considered as antiquated and obsolete.

In a position so critical, the King felt that he stood in need of a guide, a support, a prime minister ; and he accordingly made a choice, but it was not a happy one. The Queen, strongly urged by the many friends of the Duke de Choiseul, shewed herself disposed to favor his recall ; but the King retained against that minister very great prejudices, which he had imbibed from his father and from those who had the superintendence of his education.

Louis XVI had, at first, determined to entrust the reins of government to M. de Machault, an able minister and an austere magistrate. The despatch which communicated to him his nomination was already written ; and had been delivered to the messenger who was to carry it, when the King, on a sudden, took it back ; he had altered his mind. The clergy was alarmed at the austere character of M. de Machault, who would have endeavoured to confine that body within the limits of spiritual authority.

Mesdames, the King's aunts, persuaded him to appoint another prime minister ; and this was the Count de Maurepas, who had been, when al-

most still a boy, a minister in the latter days of Louis XIV. His easy disposition, his light and pleasing wit, had gained him many friends. A tendency to raillery had drawn upon him a disgrace of long duration, which he endured with an indifference that was mistaken for philosophy. His advanced age gave him the credit of possessing a degree of experience, that inspired confidence, and thus, by the caprice of fortune, frivolity concealed under hoary locks, became intrusted with the helm of the state in the midst of surrounding rocks, and on the approach of impending storms.

M. de Maurepas, an old man bordering upon eighty, named minister at the age of twenty, had since fallen into disgrace in consequence of a song composed against Madamede Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV, which was falsely attributed to him, and had been twenty-five years in exile.

This minister had lived and shone in the days of the regency. The indifference and levity of the period of his former success could still be discovered in his character, in spite of the inroads of time, and of the tediousness of a prolonged disgrace. His natural egotism was increased by age; and his administration had no other object than to avoid all agitation, and to abstain from all daring measures, by which his tranquillity might be endangered. His only wish was quietly to retain his place and quietly to end his days. All his policy consisted in taking men and times as he

found them, and in maintaining peace at home and abroad; this policy was neither injurious nor beneficial; it neither aggravated nor repaired any mischief; it was rather a palliative than a remedy for the evils of the state.

He therefore quietly suffered the old idols to retain their worship, and innovators to propagate their opinions; every career was left free to rising passions, provided they worked their way without noise. Under the guidance of so strange a mentor, the King and his court slumbered in perfect confidence on the brink of a precipice which this amiable old man and a brilliant society contrived to deck with flowers.

At the time of the nomination of M. de Maurepas, the quarrel between the dismissed parliaments and those that had succeeded them seemed to be the only indication of an approaching storm. M. de Maurepas hastened to extinguish a fire that gave him some alarm, by recalling the banished parliaments, their exile had been an act of tyranny; their recall ought not to have been a triumph to them; yet such was the case. Their power was unconditionally restored to them; and a spirit of resistance and innovation was emboldened by this victory, of the independence of the high magistracy over government. An unjust severity had, as it were, created a spirit of freedom by restraining it; an act of justice performed with weakness, gave that spirit a new life.

It is not my intention to describe in this place the policy and administration of the first years of the reign of Louis XVI, I was too young to act any part in them, and I could not therefore be well acquainted with their secret springs. At my age, I could only follow and attend the court, the brilliant circles of Paris, their superficial attractions and the vortex of their pleasures.

All those who held places and appointments near the throne belonged to an age anterior to our own. We shewed an outward respect for the old remains of an antiquated system whose manners, ignorance and prejudices, were the theme of our humorous censures: we had no ambition to share with them the burthen of public affairs; we only thought of amusements; and, led on by pleasure, we gaily ran our course in the midst of balls, fêtes, field-sports, plays and concerts, without foreseeing our future destinies.

Impeded in this light career by the antiquated pride of the old court, the irksome etiquette of the old order of things, the severity of the old clergy, the aversion of our parents to our new fashions, and our costumes which were favorable to the principle of equality, we felt disposed to adopt with enthusiasm the philosophical doctrines professed by literary men remarkable for their boldness and their wit. Voltaire seduced our imagination; Rousseau touched our hearts: we felt a secret pleasure in seeing that their

attacks were directed against an old fabric, which presented to us a gothic and ridiculous appearance.

We were thus pleased at this petty war although it was undermining our own ranks and privileges, and the remains of our ancient power ; but we felt not these attacks personally ; we merely witnessed them. It was as yet but a war of words and paper, which did not appear to us to threaten the superiority of existence we enjoyed, consolidated as we thought it, by a possession of many centuries.

As the outward forms of the edifice remained untouched, we did not perceive that the attacks were directed against the interior, and we laughed at the serious alarms of the old court and of the clergy who thundered forth against this spirit of innovation. We applauded the republican scenes represented upon our theatres, the philosophical speeches of our academies, the bold productions of our literary men ; and we were encouraged in this disposition by the tendency in the parliaments to oppose the government, and by the noble productions from the pen of such men as Turgot and Malesherbes, who only desired salutary and indispensable reforms, but whose temporising wisdom we confounded with the temerity of those who rather endeavoured to change every thing than to correct abuses.

We were pleased with the courage of liberty, whatever language it assumed, and with the convenience of equality. There is a satisfaction in

descending from a high rank, as long as the resumption of it is thought to be free and unobstructed; and regardless therefore of consequences we enjoyed our patrician advantages together with the sweets of a plebeian philosophy.

The manners of the old and of the new court gradually presented, from these causes, the same rivalry and the same discordance that might be observed in public opinion which was then giving a prelude, by light skirmishes, to those dreadful contests that have since changed the face of the whole world.

Reared up, however, from our childhood, in the maxims of ancient chivalry, our imagination regretted those heroic and almost fabulous days; and the first combat fought between the old and young courtiers consisted in an attempt on our part to bring again into fashion the dresses, customs and entertainments of the courts of Francis I, Henry II, Henry III, and Henry IV

These ideas were soon adopted by the king's brothers, Monsieur and the Count d'Artois, who seconded our views with as much warmth as activity. Our first success was brilliant, and almost had the effect of producing a complete revolution in the fashions. But our triumph only had the duration of a carnival; no sooner was it ended, than the old nobility resumed their ascendancy, and the customs of Louis XIV and of Louis XV their empire; and we returned to our garrisons, there to forget under the regula-



tions of a new discipline the too transitory dreams of knight-errantry.

This short success, this attempt at innovations had commenced in the gayest manner by ballets and quadrilles. The quadrilles were danced by Messieurs de Noailles, d'Havr , de Gu men , de Durfort, de Coigny, the two Dillons, my brother, and myself, La Fayette, and a few select young ladies.

The necessity of rehearsals previous to performing the ballets had procured us a frequent and open access to the Queen, the Princesses, and the interior apartments of the Princes. The mirth prevailing at these rehearsals and amusements caused their number to be increased. The gravity of the old courtiers, who held high offices, did not well admit of their being invited to them. Our joy would have been damped by their presence and their ceremonious formalities.

The various costumes we assumed seemed to us, as graceful, as noble, and as picturesque as the modern french dress appeared to us ridiculous. We searched for the costume most befitting a knightly, a gallant, and a warlike court. The Princes selected that of Henry IV ; and after wearing it in some quadrilles which were much applauded, we procured an order requiring that all gentlemen invited to the Queen's ball, should be dressed in that ancient costume.

It was extremely becoming to young men, but quite the reverse to men of a mature age, and of

a short and corpulent stature. The silk mantles, the plumed hats, the ribbons of lively hues gave a ridiculous appearance to all those who wanted the freshness of youth or the grace of nature.

In the midst of our amusements, balls and rehearsals, politics were humorously introduced, under the disguise of folly. The recall of the parliaments then engaged the public attention. We parodied the sittings of those grave assemblies. The part of first president was performed by one of the princes ; others acted the parts of advocates, attornies-general, and counsellors ; and, what may now appear rather a singular coincidence, La Fayette in one of those merry audiences fulfilled the functions of solicitor-general.

The dissatisfaction felt by men in high office, and by the representatives of the old court, at the intimacy allowed by the Princes to a few youthful courtiers was frequently manifested ; they watched with a peevish activity for an opportunity to remove this young swarm of favorites. We soon learned that they were endeavouring to take advantage of our thoughtless levity, and that they had hinted to M. de Maurepas the impropriety of suffering the Princes to be surrounded by young and frivolous courtiers who had thus presumed to parody the parliaments and the magistracy.

In order to avert the impending storm, I conceived the idea of dexterously parrying the blow that was levelled at us. Having assisted one

night at the King's *coucher*, I came up to one of my friends, and speaking to him of one of our joyous meetings, I affected to laugh sufficiently loud to be remarked by the King.

His majesty came up to me, and asked me the cause of such noisy mirth. After hesitating for a few minutes to confess it publicly, as he desired me to follow him, I drew near a window, and there related to him every thing that had taken place in our parliamentary sittings, giving to my recital the forms, the variety, and the coloring that might render it entertaining to his majesty. The King listened to me with pleasure, and laughed heartily.

I was informed the next day that, at the moment when the Count de Maurepas was endeavouring to draw down upon us the royal displeasure, and to point out the consequences of a parody which exposed the dignity of parliament to the ridicule of a young court, the King interrupted him by saying :—" Enough ; we will think about it for the future ; but there is nothing to be done at present, for I am, also, one of the guilty ; I have heard all that has occurred, and, so far from being angry, I have laughed at it."

We did not, however, renew those amusements but our quadrilles continued ; and, in spite of the discontent of the old court, our favor lasted during the whole of the carnival. But no sooner had the hours of pleasure made way for those of austerities, than the severity of etiquette precluded

all familiar entrance to us, and serious occupations took the place of amusements. The old court dress triumphed over our chivalrous costumes ; and deriving, for our benefit, a useful lesson upon the vicissitudes of fortune, we sank from the height of a favor which, however short and trifling, had excited so many jealousies, into the crowd of other courtiers ; thus learning, at an early age, that favor is no less fleeting than pleasure.

Chance presented to me, by a strange caprice, a remarkable opportunity of recovering the favor of one of our princes during the following winter. It also occurred in those days of pleasure so propitious to youth ; and an imprudent act of vivacity then procured for me that valuable favor which remained unchanged for many years, and was only interrupted by the wonderful events that brought about so many extraordinary changes in the world.

I was at the ball of the Opera, and unmasked ; and promenaded the ball room with a lady of the first quality leaning upon my arm, whose features were concealed by a mask. On a sudden a man, wearing a mask and domino, came up to us, and unceremoniously withdrew the lady's arm from mine, and placed it on his own. Surprised at this liberty, I hastily recovered the lady's arm, and expressed to the stranger, in plain terms, my surprise and displeasure at his boldness.

He replied in the same tone ; and as I was about

to rejoin, he came up and whispered these words in my ear:—"Let us make no noise in this place ; I will give you satisfaction elsewhere."—"The terms are not equal, answered I ; you know who I am, and are a stranger to me ; give me your name."—"That is unnecessary ; do you go to-morrow to the Queen's ball?"—"Yes."—"Well, then, I will meet you there:" so saying he walked away.

What astonished me the more was, to observe that the lady, who had occasioned and witnessed our quarrel, so far from appearing alarmed, was laughing at it ; and, without naming the stranger who had so cavalierly taken her arm away from mine, seemed to be acquainted with him.

It will easily be imagined that I was one of the first to appear at the Queen's ball, at Versailles, on the following day. I accosted each person that entered, fancying he might be my man ; but their friendly or careless manner of addressing me, quickly dispelled that idea. At last the ball room became quite full, and no one had come to afford me the desired explanation.

The inner doors were soon thrown open ; the court made its appearance ; the members of the royal family took their seats ; afterwards, before the opening of the country dances, the princes advanced towards us, and addressed in succession those persons whom they wished to honor with that mark of favor.

One of them came up to me, and said : " M. de Segur, where do you reside, at Versailles ?"—

I replied that I lived at the Hotel d'Orleans, and took the liberty of asking the motive of this question. "I wish to know," said he, in a low tone of voice, "in order to give you a brief explanation of what took place yesterday, between you and a marked individual at the ball of the opera. I am ready to give you satisfaction on the subject, and leave you the choice of weapons, from a pin to a cannon, unless you prefer the title of *my brother in arms*, which will be the pledge of my friendship for you." I was lost in apologies and thanks, and no less surprised than pleased at so happy and so unexpected a termination of so singular an adventure.

The prince never ceased, from that moment, to treat me with the utmost kindness; he often afforded me the pleasure of his conversation, which was distinguished by extensive information, and an amiable wit. He allowed me to peruse some verses he had composed, and was pleased to read some of mine. After my return from America, and when I was on the eve of my departure for Russia, he bestowed upon me the royal order, of which he was the grand master.

Whilst at St. Petersburg I received many letters from him, in which he always honored me with that title which had inspired me with so much gratitude. Unfortunately, however, at the expiration of the five years of my mission, France was overturned; every thing had undergone a change. After my return to Paris, I seldom saw this august Prince, who was soon compelled, by

the troubles of the time, to hasten his departure from his native country.

My position, my family, and my opinions, made me determine upon placing myself amongst those who hoped to save their country by remaining in it ; and I was thus separated from the Prince whose goodness had raised such flattering hopes in my mind, by those political storms which afterwards shook every throne, created and destroyed so many illusions, and were the origin of so many crimes and virtues, and of so much glory. I did not see him again until the restoration, and recollection and gratitude are all that now remain to me of this happy tie.

If that Prince had still been alive, and had perused these pages, he would have smiled, and forgiven me the respectful homage I am now paying to him, by presuming to recall one of the traits of his youth, which does equal honor to the elegance of his mind, and to the suavity of his disposition.

In those early years of my life, it must be owned, every thing smiled upon me. Fortune, like nature, seems to reserve all her flowers for the spring. My advancement in the army was rapid : appointed sub-lieutenant in 1769, in the regiment of cavalry commanded by M. de Castries, an intimate friend of my father, I was promoted, two years afterwards, to the rank of Captain ; and, in 1776, the King, at the request of the Duke of Orleans, gave me the rank of se-

cond colonel in the regiment of dragoons of Orleans.

Chance procured me, about the same time, an admission into the intimate society of the Countess Jules de Polignac. Nothing, it would seem, could be more contrary to the views of my young ambition than such an intimacy, however pleasing it might be, with a family distinguished, it is true, by its birth, but at that time removed from the sphere of greatness and favors.

The Countess Jules and her husband, together with her sister-in-law, the Countess Diane de Polignac, lived in modest retirement, far from court, where they seldom made their appearance. Their tastes and dispositions led them to prefer the sweets of a private life to the storms of a public one.

It was impossible to find a person of a more mild and prepossessing countenance than the Countess Jules; and none exceeded her in the charm of her voice, or in the amiable qualities of the heart and mind.

Her relations, the Countesses de Châlons and d'Andlaw, the Count de Vaudreuil, the Duke de Coigny, M. Delille, a man distinguished by the originality of his wit;—the Baron de Besenval, whose agreeable levity, entirely French, made one forget that he was born a Swiss, formed a delightful circle, in which hours passed away like minutes.

The pleasure of these meetings was encreased by the accession of a man who, from an inferior



rank, was rapidly raised to a high fortune by the effect of chance. He had long been known under the name of Monfalcon ; and though merely a lieutenant and adjutant in a regiment of infantry, his fine person and impetuous courage caused him to be noticed by my father and by M. de Castries in the affair of Warbourg.

In this affair, in which ten thousand Frenchmen fought with obstinacy against the whole army of the Duke of Brunswick, some of our battalions were retiring after having taken, lost, and re-taken, for the third time, an important position. Young Monfalcon, sword in hand, his eye full of fire, his hair in disorder, and the comeliness of his person still heightened by his courage, advanced, called, encouraged the soldiers, rallied them, rushed at their head into the thickest of the engagement, triumphed, and regained possession of the disputed eminence.

The two generals, who had witnessed his bravery, solicited a reward for him ; but as his name was not known, and he was without fortune or connections, he only obtained the cross of Saint Louis, and the rank of major in a small town. This was rather putting him upon a retired pension than rewarding his services.

All prospect of advancement seemed closed for him, when, by a singular chance, he found in his retirement, that fortune which he had vainly pursued on the field of battle. He frequently went to pass some time at the small country house of an old aunt, and as the monotonous life she led could

not afford him any enjoyment, he amused himself by reading over the many dusty old parchments deposited in the archives of the *château*; and, to his great surprise, he discovered, amongst them, some title deeds, which evidently established his descent from the ancient house of Adhemar, which was generally thought to be extinct.

Provided with these documents, he hastened to Paris, and communicated to my father and to M. de Castries, who were his protectors, the discovery he had made. They, at first, laughed at it, and considered his hopes quite chimerical. He, however, carried the deeds, by their advice, to Cherin, the genealogist, a profound judge in these matters, and perfectly incorruptible; had he, indeed, not been so, a poor town major could not have found the means of bribing him.

Cherin, after a long examination, pronounced the titles to be authentic; and the new Count d'Adhemar, having been acknowledged, and having, through the intervention of my father and of M. de Castries, obtained the rank of colonel, commanding the regiment of infantry of Chartres, was presented at court.

Madame de Valbelle, a widow possessing a fortune of forty thousand livres a year, and a lady of the Queen's palace, was charmed with the new colonel, and, hoping to compensate for the disparity of ages by the gift of her property, married him. M. d'Adhemar joined to regularity of features, an amiable mind, and a charming voice, and being intimate with the Count de Vaudreuil,

he was presented by him to the Countess Jules and soon numbered amongst her friends.

All this party sometimes met together at the Dutchess de Bourbon's, who gave little concerts, which displayed the talents of the Countess Jules, of the Countess Amelie de Boufflers, of Messieurs d'Adhemar and de Vaudreuil, and of the Duke de Guines, who played the flute in a superior style.

In this circle public affairs were never thought of ; and it would have been difficult to foresee that, in a short time afterwards, the family of the Polignacs, and their friends, would attain the summit of favor, and rise above all those courtiers who were born in the palace, and had grown old in courts.

I have said that the young Queen had a heart formed for affection. She wished to have a friend who would be captivated rather by her personal endowments than by her power, and who would love her for herself. Struck by the countenance of the Countess Jules, by the soft expression of her eyes, by the modest and open sensibility which her engaging physiognomy disclosed, she conceived for her an attachment which lasted all her life. Her entreaties, at length, overcame the modesty of Madame de Polignac, who came to the court, and was established there in the character of favorite.

The Queen appointed her husband master of the horse ; the Countess Diane was placed near the person of Madame Elizabeth, as her lady of honor ; M. de Vaudreuil received the office of

high falconer ; and M. d'Adhemar named *chevalier d'honneur* to Madame Elizabeth, obtained the appointment of minister at the Court of Brussels, and, in a few years afterwards, of ambassador to England.

It may well be supposed that these new favors, at first, occasioned surprise, and afterwards created envy ; but this envy was almost always disarmed by the gentleness, the modesty, the disinterestedness of the favorite. Never was a favorite seen with less avidity or egotism ; and, in fact, so far from wishing to monopolize favors, pensions, or appointments, she preferred obtaining them for others to securing them for herself.

A striking proof of this was exhibited at a later period, when a great public scandal deprived the illustrious house of Rohan of an exalted office ; the Prince de Guémené became bankrupt for twenty millions, and the Princess his wife, who was governess of the Children of France, found herself under the necessity of resigning that important trust.

The Queen then became desirous of confiding to her friend the education of her children ; but it required the greatest efforts to overcome her resistance, and to compel her to accept such a signal mark of royal favor, in the appointment to an office which was considered one of the highest in the kingdom.

My great intimacy with the Countess Jules, who became Dutchess de Polignac, and with her friends, procured me a share in her good fortune. The

Queen, who often saw me in that circle, which she frequently adorned by her presence, and where she generally passed her evenings, gradually condescended to treat me with particular kindness ; and, in a few years afterwards, her influence greatly contributed to my father's appointment as minister of war.

M. d'Adhemar, of whom I have already spoken, was kind enough, at the request of my father, to conduct me to Strasburgh, where I was going to follow a course of jurisprudence. His regiment was stationed there, and we applied together to the study of diplomacy, which had hitherto been equally unknown to both.

On my return to Paris, I found myself plunged in the former vortex of *fêtes*, circles, balls, and pleasures of every kind. My reception at court was daily improving, and my father was inclined to exert his influence to procure me a situation in one of the royal households ; but a duty of that nature was disagreeable to me, and I opposed his intention. I was not yet tormented by the dreams of ambition. My liberty was dearer to me than a brilliant, but an irksome dependence. Duty called me to Versailles, but inclination made me a resident in Paris.

My time was not, however, chiefly engaged in the amusements and gallantries of thoughtless young men, to which my age might have pleaded an excuse ; I eagerly sought the company of persons at whose houses the most renowned literary

characters, and men of learning were in the habit of assembling, and frequently visited Madame Geoffrin and Madame du Deffant. I also found in some of the higher circles, such as those of the Princess de Beauvau, the Dutchess de Choiseul, Madame la Maréchale de Luxembourg, the Dutchess de Grammont, Madame de Montesson, then secretly married to the Duke of Orleans, the Dutchess d'Anville, the Countess de Tesse, and my mother, the advantage of mixing in conversations sometimes profound, and sometimes light and trifling, always uniting instruction to amusement, and possessing a charm which is entirely banished in the present day.

They exhibited an indescribable mixture of simplicity and elevation, of grace and reason, of criticism and urbanity. From them the history and policy of ancient and modern times, and a multitude of court anecdotes, from the days of Louis XIV down to the then reigning King, might be imperceptibly collected: thus, leading through a gallery as instructive, and varied in portraits and events, as that which is offered in the inimitable letters of Madame de Sévigné.

Every new production of the men of transcendent genius and brilliant wit, who were, at that time, an ornament to France, was eagerly sought for. The works of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Helvetius, Rousseau, Duclos, Voltaire, Diderot, and Marmontel, furnished inexhaustible subjects

to those conversations in which almost every judgment pronounced, appeared to be dictated by reason and good taste.

The discussions which arose in the course of these conversations, were carried on with the utmost temper; disputes very seldom occurred; and, as a delicate sense of propriety had carried the art of pleasing to perfection, all tediousness was discarded by carefully avoiding to insist too much upon any subject. The precept the most strictly observed was that of Boileau, who teaches us to run perpetually, "*Du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère.*" It often happened, therefore, that, in the same evening, the conversation turned upon the *Esprit des Lois* and the tales of Voltaire, the philosophy of Helvetius and the operas of Sedaine or Marmontel, the tragedies of La Harpe and the licentious tales of Abbé de Voisenon, the discoveries in India by Abbé Raynal and the songs of Collé, the politics of Mably and the delightful poetry of Saint-Lambert or Abbé Delille.

The most distinguished men of letters were received in a flattering manner by the higher nobility; and this mixture of courtiers with literary men, imparted to the former more knowledge, and to the latter more taste. At no time did Paris present a greater resemblance to the celebrated Athens.

To my ardent passion for literature I was indebted, young as I was, for the friendship of D'Alembert, of Abbé Raynal, of the Count de

Guibert, of Champfort, Suard, Abbé Arnaud, Rulhiere, the Chevalier de Boufflers, the Chevalier de Chastellux, Abbé Barthelemy, and Abbé Delille; for the kindness of M. de Malesherbes, and the advice of the celebrated Count d'Aranda. La Harpe and Marmontel instructed me by their prudent counsels, and fostered my earliest productions.

The slight, though rather brilliant success which attended my first attempts, encouraged my self-love, and inspired me with a persevering ambition to acquire more solid and legitimate titles to literary fame. By submitting my first productions to men so well qualified to judge, I learned of them how very difficult is the art of writing.

The conversations of men who had acquired a well deserved celebrity, are more instructive than their works. We derive from them an acquaintance with a variety of rules, in judgment and in taste, and with a multitude of observations and shades, which it would be very difficult to lay down in writing.

No book could have taught me what I learned in a few conversations with Marmontel and La Harpe, respecting the forms of style and the secret springs of eloquence, with Boufflers upon the art of introducing without effort a pointed and happy expression, with M. de Beauvau and Suard upon the correctness of style, with the Duke de Nivernais upon the shades of elegance and the delicacy of taste, with Abbé Delille upon



the means of grasping in our minds that magic wand which gives animation to every subject.

I will only quote to this purpose a single example, already known, but never too often repeated. It was asserted, in the presence of Abbé Delille, that the French language, not possessing, like the Greek and Latin, long and short syllables, was not susceptible of conveying, like them, a descriptive picture by accent or quantity; in short, that it was deficient in harmony.

The Abbé pretended, on the contrary, that our happy language offered every resource to real talent, and that its imitative harmony was capable not only of portraying the differences, but also the shades of objects; in proof of which he quoted his own verses :

Peins-nous légèrement l'amant léger de Flore ;  
Qu'un doux ruisseau murmure en vers plus doux encore.  
Entend-on de la mer les ondes bouillonner ?  
Le vers, comme un torrent, en roulant doit tonner.  
Qu'Ajax soulève un roc, et l'arrache avec peine,  
Chaque syllabe est lourde et pesamment se traîne.  
Mais vois d'un pied léger Camille effleurer l'eau :  
Le vers vole et la suit, aussi prompt qu'un oiseau.

Abbé Delille united to the charm of his poetry that of reading it with a perfection truly fascinating.

Nothing is more uncommon in France than the talent of reading properly: the art of modulating the inflections of the voice, in strict accordance with the force of expression, with correctness, and with nature, is there entirely

unknown. This art, however, so familiar to the ancients, constitutes much of the talent of the orator and the poet. Every one knows that the finest scene will produce no effect if ill recited; and yet, in the general habits of life, a monotonous pronunciation is still adhered to, which shortens every thing, clips half our words, is quite devoid of character, stamps uniformity upon every subject, and thus detracts from the grace of wit, and the power of reason.

Impressed with these truths, I followed the advice of La Harpe and Delille, and of my mother, whose judgment was always enlightened by a taste no less correct than refined, and, for a long time, I took lessons of Le Kain, the celebrated actor, in order to learn to read well, and speak with proper tone and emphasis.

The self-love of the most ambitious is generally directed to one sole object, that which his position, his faculties, his inclinations, and the manners of his age will point out to him. Thus, amongst the ancients, the activity of all young men was excited by the rostrum, the palms of eloquence, the laurels gathered in the wars, and other laurels offered to talent by the muses: these were the motives of their ardor, these the rewards they aspired to obtain.

At a later period, the minds of the generality of men were detached from earthly objects, and directed towards heaven. The glory of saints was preferred to that of heroes; camps were deserted for monasteries, the rostrum for the

pulpit, the purple for the sack-cloth. Literary or warlike passions made way for religious enthusiasm.

The mask of piety was soon put on, with eagerness, by ambition, ever ready to follow any road leading to consideration. Politics assumed the disguise of religion; each courtier affected a piety which, by a pretended renouncement to earthly goods and worldly pleasures, opened to him all the sources of fortune and power.

Amongst modern nations there existed, for a long time, a constant mixture of superstition and fanaticism, sad inheritance, transmitted by the corrupted Romans, with the warlike ardor of the ancient Franks and Germans, who acknowledged no law but that derived from superiority of strength, whose only pleasure was war, and who fancied that heaven was closed against cowards, and open to the brave.

Amongst these new people, and with us more particularly, love was treated with indulgence by religion and glory, so that the French character, until the 17th century, maintained itself at once devout, warlike and gallant.

These manners were those of the feudal or chivalrous times: the threefold desire of serving his God, fighting for his king, and pleasing his lady, glowed alone in the breast of every young noblemen from his childhood; and, with the exception of that class which is condemned by its poverty, to labour and ignorance, the whole

nation was more or less animated with these chivalrous sentiments.

At the period, however, of my entering into the world, these sentiments, of which some traces were yet to be found, had already experienced considerable alterations. The discovery of printing and the reformation introduced by Luther, had produced a wish to investigate and analyse every thing. The mind, issuing from the darkness of ages, was dazzled by this new light, and endeavored, through the assistance of its rays, to discriminate between truth and error, to know every thing, to introduce perfection in every thing.

Blushing at the ignorance of our forefathers, we not only wished to appropriate to ourselves the treasures of science possessed by the ancients, but we even pretended to equal, and soon to surpass them in the career of arts, legislation, literature and philosophy.

This revolution, gradually brought about by the discoveries of the 15th century, by the wars of religion, by the emancipation of some republic that had thrown off the yoke of arbitrary power, and freed themselves from the sway of Rome, in short, by the glory of the great writers of the age of Louis XIV, and afterwards by the epicurean philosophy of the regency, had exercised so general an influence over the rising youth of France, at the opening of the reign of Louis XVI, that each of us might have presented to the at-

tention of an enlightened observer, the most singular medley of Greek, Roman, Gallic, French, chivalrous and philosophical manners.

Brought up in the principles of a military monarchy, the pride of a privileged nobility, the fascinations of the court and the maxims of religion; carried away, on the other hand, by the licentiousness of the age, and by a gallantry of which we boasted; excited to aspire after liberty by the writings of the philosophers, and by the speeches of the parliaments; instead of proceeding, with acknowledged principles, towards a positive object, we wished to enjoy, at one and the same time, the favors of the court, the pleasures of the town, the approbation of the clergy, the good will of the lower classes, the applause of philosophers, the fame acquired by literary successes, the favor of the ladies and the esteem of virtuous men; so that a young French courtier, animated by that desire of reputation which keeps men of distinction separated from the vulgar, thought, spoke, and acted by turns, as a citizen of Athens, of Rome, or of Lutecia, as a knight errant, a crusader, or a courtier, as a follower of Plato, of Socrates, or of Epicurus.

This divergency of ideas necessarily created a confusion, which extended even to the court. The King's aunts revived the recollection of the pious and austere customs of the latter days of Louis XIV; M. de Maurepas of the soft epicurism of the regency; the Count du Muy, minister of war, of the courage, severity, and devo-

tion of ancient knights; M. de Miromenil, keeper of the seals, of the old and almost servile dependency of some magistrates under absolute reigns; M. Turgot of the spirit of those wise philanthropists, citizens and not courtiers, who, by the introduction of great reforms, were desirous of delivering the people from oppression, of giving the ascendancy to the public welfare over private interests, to justice over arbitrary law, and to principles over prejudice.

The recollections of the league were still discoverable, in the forms of parliamentary parties, in the opinions of a few peers, of several magistrates, and even of a prince of the blood, the old Prince of Conti. The party of religion and of despotism had, likewise, its defenders in the Marsan's and d'Aiguillon's, and the party of the Duke de Choiseul exhibited at the same time, in its ranks what was most brilliant in the system of the ancient monarchy, and in that of the innovators.

In the midst of this general movement, and of this conflict of opposite opinions, the good King Louis XVI and his young Queen, both sought after truth, desired what was right, and formed dreams of public happiness without foreseeing their own fatal destiny.

Louis XVI was the most upright man in his kingdom; firmness alone was wanting to the rare qualities he possessed; and in the midst of so many passions in a state of ferment, of so many projects of innovation, of a want so uni-

versal for a change, his conciliating goodness drew him too rapidly towards the numerous rocks rising out of this agitated sea, and against which it was evident that our ancient monarchy must inevitably come to pieces.

The object of every one was merely to repair this old edifice ; and in this simultaneous attempt of all, it was levelled with the ground. Too much light was brought to the work by many, and a conflagration ensued. The consequence of all this has been that the last fifty years of our harassed lives, have been to each of us a dream alternately monarchical, republican, warlike and philosophical.

Notwithstanding the friendship that bound me to the society of the new favorites at court, I continued to prefer Paris to Versailles ; the love of literature and of pleasures had an invincible attraction for me ; summer alone and my duties took me away from town. In the garrisons, however, I habitually devoted to study the hour of liberty which the service allowed to me.

I there saw another picture, and other traces of our ancient chivalrous customs. Chance placed me in a situation in which agreeably to the manners of the age, and in obedience to the old prejudices which were mixed up with the new ideas, I was obliged to have an affair of honor ; for the practice of duelling, almost the only surviving gothic prejudice, had constantly stood its ground, as it still does, in opposition to religion, common sense, philosophy, and the laws.

Thus, although our kings took an oath at their coronations not to pardon the guilty, little pains were taken to conceal a duel ; and mine which made a great noise at Lisle, so far from drawing down any disgrace upon me, brought me into greater vogue and contributed to increase my success at court and in town. I fulfil one of the objects I have in view in relating it ; for it will exhibit a singular mixture of vivacity, courtesy, and levity which characterised the french manners of that period.

The army did not then resemble what it now is ; it shewed the same desire of distinguishing itself, the same zeal for the service of its king and country ; the officers paid the same attention to the military exercises and military duties ; but its composition was different, and the bonds of subordination were much looser than they are at the present day.

The regiments were completed by recruiting only ; so that instead of receiving under their colors the sons of families out of every class, drawn by the conscription, and in consequence of a general law, they numbered only young men who, for the most part, had determined to enlist either through idleness or derangement in their affairs. No prospect of promotion was presented to them ; and nothing was more uncommon than to see soldiers or petty officers, rise to the rank of officers. The few to whom chance might procure this advancement, only obtained it after many years service, and the name



they received sufficiently indicated the unfrequency of those favorable chances ; they were called *officiers de fortune*. The nobility alone had a right to enter the service with the rank of sub-lieutenants.

This ancient custom was founded on the feudal system, and on the prejudice which excluded a french gentleman from any other career than that of arms, diplomacy, or the law.

These remains of our old customs opposed considerable difficulty to the maintenance of a perfect subordination between officers separated, it is true, by the gradations of rank, but who, as noblemen, considered themselves on a footing of equality with one another.

Each officer paid a respect to his superior in field exercises, on the parade and in the hours of service ; but few traces of subordination were to be found at any other time or place. When returned to town or to court, they would often necessarily meet in an inverse order ; and a country gentleman, the colonel of a regiment, would find himself in a situation of inferiority, with his young captains, or sub-lieutenants, who might hold appointments, or be graced with illustrious names, such as Montmorency, Rohan, Crillon, etc.

The regiment to which I belonged offered a striking proof of this anomaly. The colonel, commanding it under the orders of M. de Castries, was a poor gentleman from Gascony, named Dabeins, who had grown old in the infe-

rior ranks : he reckoned under his colors, besides the officers on the strength of the corps, seventeen supernumerary sub-lieutenants in expectancy, such as the prince of Lambesc, of the house of Lorraine, master of the horse of the court of France ; the son of the Duke de Fleury, first gentleman of the chamber ; the counts de Matignon, de Roucheroles, de Balby ; in short, the most brilliant young noblemen of the court.

Mr. Dabeins well knew how to restrain our turbulent spirit, and at times how to humble our pride ; often, on great field days, and in presence of a rather numerous assemblage, he felt a pleasure in treating us slightly by such expressions as the following : “ M. Fleury, M. Lambesc, M. Segur, you manœuvre like giddy young men ; I shall put you under arrest, in order to ripen your brains.” Turning at the same time to the *officiers de fortune*, he would say to them : “ M. de Carré, M. de Créplot, M. de Roger, you have very properly executed my orders ; you shew that you are as fit to command as to obey.” It generally happened that his praises and reproaches were not very justly bestowed ; the result, however was pretty fair, since he encouraged the humble, and humbled the proud.

It will be easily understood, that, notwithstanding the severity of some commanding officers, it became very difficult, when away from the service, to maintain subordination amongst so many young noblemen accustomed from their infancy to

consider themselves on a par with each other, and who fancied they were born to command. The middle classes of society had often to complain of their pride when in garrisons or in quarters.

For the last few years, however, the spirit of equality, introduced by the increase of knowledge, had begun to spread through the nation. In several cities, such as Toulouse, Lyons, Besançon, Strasburgh, the bravery of many young students had, in many duels compelled noblemen to admit that the sword may restore the level, when honor claims it, and justice refuses to acknowledge its existence.

It generally happened that there was less cause of complaint against the higher nobility or persons attached to the court than against the country nobility, who were poor and unenlightened; and this ought not to occasion surprise; for the latter had nothing but their titles, which they were continually opposing to the real superiority of some of the middle classes whose knowledge and wealth embarrassed and humbled them.

A courtier was generally known by his urbanity of manners; whilst pride and a disposition to be easily offended, were oftener to be met with amongst young country gentlemen. These quarrelsome characters were the most difficult to restrain; shunned by the circles of the middle classes, idle in their own apartments, all their time, after the hours of exercise, was wasted

away at coffee-houses, the theatre and the billiard table.

There was in Lisle a good company of actors; the attendance of young lieutenants and sub-lieutenants of the garrison at the theatre was so constant, and at so early an hour, that the captains and superior officers frequently found all the places taken when they came to the first tier of boxes.

The commandant of Lisle, being informed of this circumstance, adopted a hasty measure, a course quite at variance with the usual tenor of his conduct; he strictly forbade the lieutenants and sub-lieutenants from entering the first tier of boxes, until after the first act of the performance.

Every one was surprised and dissatisfied at this order, and it was agreed between all the captains of the garrison, by way of consolation to their junior comrades, that they should share their fate, and not occupy the places from which the latter were excluded.

Having been absent for some days in the country, I was quite ignorant of the order issued and of the effect it had produced. Reaching Lisle when the representation was about to begin, I went into one of the dress-boxes, and to my great surprise found it empty, as were all those of the same tier. My surprise was not diminished at noticing that hats were laid upon every chair of those boxes. They belonged to the lieutenants

and sub-lieutenants who, to evade the order, had their places thus bespoken for them.

As the box I had entered was spacious, I introduced a chair between two of those that were in front, and sat down, as much astonished as ever at finding that the first tier was so empty, when the rest of the theatre was quite full.

I was still more surprised when I saw that, immediately after the first act was over, every door of the first tier was thrown open, and the boxes were filled with officers.

One of them, M. de la Villeneuve, a lieutenant in the regiment of infantry of the Dauphin, took his seat by my side, and said to me : “ Sir, you “ have thrown down my hat which was upon “ that chair.” I had, in fact, done so quite unintentionally on sitting down. I made him a polite apology ; but he replied with unaccountable ill-humour, that such an act of impertinence could not be redressed by a bad excuse. I answered that, after the performance, he should receive a serious explanation, and one that might not be quite so satisfactory to him.

This point being agreed upon between us, he remained silent ; but as he was young and impatient, he could not wait until the end of the performance. When the first play was over, he rose from his seat, and beckoned to me to follow him. At the moment of my going away, a young lieutenant of my regiment, the count d’Assas, who happened to be behind me, and who wished to have my seat in case I should not return, said to

me, repeating this line of a comic opera which was then being performed ; “ Segur, you are going,

“ Pour ne revenir jamais, pour ne revenir jamais.”

To which I merely replied, “ You are perhaps mistaken.”

As soon as I had joined my boisterous lieutenant at the foot of the staircase, we left the theatre together, and having reached the parade, he, after some moments of reflection, which proceeded from a heart as good as his disposition was thoughtless and hasty, said to me : “ We “ are indeed very foolish ; we are about to cut “ each other’s throats for a trifle which assuredly “ does not call for it, for a hat that had fallen “ down.”—“ This reflection,” I replied, “ is very “ just ; but it comes too late ; I have not the honor of “ knowing you ; the wine is drawn, and we must “ drink it.”\*—“ As you please then,” rejoined he, “ let us leave the town.”—“ No,” said I, “ it is very late ; and whichever of us may be “ wounded, ought not to be left in a field without “ assistance ; let us settle the matter upon a “ bastion.” He observed that this was forbidden under the severest penalties. “ What matters “ the prohibition,” I replied ; “ the shortest fol- “ lies are always the best, it will be soon over ; “ let us proceed.”

Having reached the interior of a bastion, we

\* A French proverbial expression, meaning, “ we have “ gone too far to recede.”—(*Translator.*)

took our coats off, and drew our swords ; my adversary, who was ardent and nimble, sprung towards me, with such rapidity, that I had not time to parry the thrust ; and I felt that he had struck me in the side. As fortune would have it, he had missed my body by his impetuosity ; and it was the hilt of his sword that had touched me, “ Faith,” said I, to myself, “ d’Assas had nearly “ predicted right.”

I charged my adversary in my turn, and made a bold thrust at him with my sword ; the point entered his body and rested upon a bone. He wished to go on, but the pain prevented him from keeping firm upon his legs ; this would have given me too great an advantage over him ; and I therefore proposed that we should not proceed any further ; he consented, and accepted the assistance of my arm to help him on.

We re-entered the town ; by the light of a lamp, I observed that he was covered with blood, and sad reflections occurred to my mind respecting the cruelty of our prejudices. We soon found a coach, into which I placed him with difficulty ; I wished to take a seat in it by his side, but he absolutely refused it.

Ascribing this refusal to unabated resentment on his part, I expressed to him my surprise at it. “ You do me injustice,” said he ; “ I am wild, “ rather strange, and even tolerably headstrong ; “ but I am far from retaining any ill-will against “ you ; I wish, on the contrary, to inflict upon “ myself a severer punishment even than you

“ have done ; the wrong is wholly on my side ;  
“ I provoked you without cause ; and I beg, that  
“ were it only for ten minutes, you will return  
“ to the theatre, and resume the seat which has  
“ been the unfortunate cause of our quarrel.  
“ You may afterwards return to take care of me  
“ if you think proper ; in which case you will  
“ confer an honor and a pleasure upon me ; other-  
“ wise, I have resolved that we shall never meet  
“ again.” I represented in vain that I could not  
leave him alone in the condition in which he was,  
and in the uncertainty whether the wound was  
mortal or not ; he closed the coach door, and  
gave me his address.

In order to comply with his wishes, I went to  
the theatre, and recovered my seat from d'Assas,  
to whom I related my adventure ; reminding him  
of the fine prediction he had heedlessly pro-  
nounced, at which he appeared much grieved.  
I returned in the course of a quarter of an hour  
to my wounded lieutenant, and found him in  
great pain, although free from danger. He re-  
covered at the end of three weeks ; and related  
this affair to all his comrades. It produced  
a singular result ; the order was withdrawn ;  
all quarrels for places ceased, and harmony  
was restored between the officers of different  
ranks.

As I passed through Nantes five years after  
this time, on my way to embark for America,  
I found there the regiment of the Dauphin. My  
lieutenant of light dragoons being informed of



my arrival, invited me to dine, with all the young men of the garrison. On this occasion there was only a clashing of glasses: it was a scene of cordiality and lively mirth. I have mentioned this anecdote, for no other reason than that it appears to me calculated to portray the spirit of the age, and the manners of our times.

My stay at Lisle closed with this adventure; for I received three weeks afterwards the news of my appointment to the rank of second colonel of the regiment of dragoons of Orleans, and at the same time an order from my father to rejoin him in Franche-Comté, of which province he was governor.

I felt a very gratifying pleasure in observing what veneration was entertained for my father in his province, and to how great a degree his noble frankness, aided by the grace and wit of my mother, had contributed, in a short time, to restore to tranquillity, a country until then always agitated, to conciliate contending interests, and create, at least as far as outward appearances went, the most satisfactory harmony between the military bodies, the magistracy, the administration, and the middle classes.

This and many other examples have proved to me that notwithstanding our national levity, or perhaps as a consequence of that levity, the qualities the most necessary for governing us, are gravity, justice, firmness and good faith. To these must

be added a certain politeness which, without being injurious to dignity, conciliates the self-love of every class ; for the most irritable of all passions in France is self-love, or vanity, if this word be preferred ; whence it happens that, for the last thirty years, equality has always been more warmly and more constantly defended than liberty. In the eyes of some people, indeed, a state of levelling servitude, weighing equally upon all, would appear less insufferable than a solid liberty constructed upon a system of gradations, and distinguished into various classes and ranks.

I made this year an excursion to the waters of Spa, which were then greatly frequented and much in vogue. Spa was the coffee-house of Europe ; it was resorted to from every country, under the pretence of health, but in reality in search of pleasure. A more unbounded liberty was enjoyed there than in any other country in the world. The bishop of Liege, the sovereign of this petty state, was too insignificant a prince to force his laws and customs upon foreigners. His example was set at nought ; and about a hundred invalids in his pay presented no very effectual check ; consequently the French, English, Dutch, Germans, Russians, Swedes, Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese lived in this place, each according to the manners of their country ; and there was an extraordinary fascination in such a variety of customs.

It was at Spa that I learned, for the first time, the events which indicated an approaching and mighty revolution in America. The town of Boston was the first theatre of this sanguinary conflict between Great Britain and her colonies. The first cannon shot, fired in that hemisphere, in defence of the standard of liberty, resounded throughout Europe, with the rapidity of lightning.

I recollect that the Americans were then styled insurgents, and Bostonians; their daring courage electrified every mind, and excited universal admiration, more particularly amongst young people, who always feel an inclination for novelties, and an eagerness for battles. In the small town of Spa, in which were collected together so many travellers, or casual and voluntary deputies, as it were, from every European monarchy, I was very much struck on observing the unanimous burst of so lively and general an interest in the rebellion of a people against a sovereign.

The American insurrection was every where applauded, and became, as it were, a fashion; the scientific English game of whist, made way, on a sudden, in every circle, for a game, equally serious, which received the name of *Boston*. This impulse of feeling, however trifling it may appear, was a remarkable forerunner of the mighty convulsions that were about to shake the whole world; and I was very far from being the only one whose heart then beat at the sound of liberty just waking

from its slumbers, and struggling to throw off the yoke of arbitrary power.

Those who blamed us afterwards, ought to recollect that they then shared our enthusiasm, and felt a pleasure in bringing back the old recollections of the *ligue* and of the *fronde* ; the times and the cause were widely different ; but their censuring disposition was then unable to draw a distinction between them.

Besides, how could the monarchical governments of Europe wonder at the enthusiasm for liberty which was manifested by young men of ardent minds, who were every where instructed to admire the heroes of Greece and of Rome, before whom the most enthusiastic praises were bestowed upon the release of Switzerland and Holland from thralldom, and who were taught to read and to reflect by constantly studying the works of the most celebrated republicans of antiquity ?

Such was, however, the blindness of princes and of the great : they had favored the progress of knowledge, and required a passive obedience, that can only exist in a state of ignorance. They wished to enjoy all the luxuries provided for them by civilization and arts, and would not suffer learned men, artists, or enlightened plebeians, to emerge from a condition bordering upon slavery. They imagined, in short, what was quite impossible, that the light of reason could spread its brilliancy without dispelling the

clouds of prejudices originating in ages of barbarism.

Every doctrine in education, or progress in philosophy, every literary success or theatrical applause, ought to have served as a warning to the ruling powers that a great epoch had arrived, that it required a different art to govern mankind, that the enjoyment of their long lost rights, which such men as the immortal Montesquieu had brought to their knowledge, could not any further be withheld from them.

On my return to Paris, I found the same agitation prevailing also there in the public mind. Nobody seemed favorable to the cause of England; all openly expressed their wishes for the success of the Bostonians.

Notwithstanding this manifestation of the love of liberty in France, inequality was still maintained by all the influence of right, of privileges and the laws; though, in reality, it was daily diminishing: the institutions were monarchical, but the manners were republican. Public situations and offices continued to be the portion of certain classes; but, beyond the exercise of these functions, equality began to prevail in every circle. It often happened, indeed, that literary titles took precedence of titles of nobility, and homages, which removed every trace of inferiority, were not alone reserved for men of genius, but literary men of the second and third order, were often greeted in the world, and received

with those attentions which were not shewn to the provincial nobility.

The court alone preserved its habitual superiority ; but, as courtiers in France are even much more the slaves of fashion than of the prince, they thought it becoming to descend from their rank, and came to pay their court to Marmon-  
tel, to D'Alembert, to Raynal, hoping, by this intimacy, to rise in public opinion.

This spirit of equality formed, at this time, the charm of the circles of Paris, and drew crowds of foreigners to it from every country. The enjoyments of private life, of a society free from pride or restraint, of a conversation without disguise or restriction, were unknown every where else, except in England. Elsewhere there existed an insurmountable and perpetual separation between the classes ; each lived with his equals ; there was no reciprocal interchange between the minds and the interests of the unconnected portions of the enlightened population.

With us, on the contrary, these frequent communications between the various divisions of society, these mutual intercourses and reciprocal attentions, this interchange of ideas augmented the rich stores of our civilization ; and, by these newly established relations, the nobility acquired information and knowledge of every kind, of which they were formerly deprived, whilst enlightened men of the inferior classes, culled, from the intercourse, the light but charming flowers

of a refined taste, a delicate perception of propriety and an elegant gracefulness, which are only to be found in the midst of a polished court.

It must also be confessed, that this spirit of equality, had taken deep root in the French nobility long before it extended itself to the third class of the state. The feudal hierarchy was forgotten. Henry IV had been heard to say: "That he considered as his noblest title of honor to be the first amongst French gentlemen." The peers alone, it is true, possessed the right of admission into parliament, and the honors of the Louvre. The Dutchesses enjoyed the prerogative of sitting upon a *tabouret*\* in the Queen's apartments. But, beyond these circumstances of rare occurrence, all the nobility considered themselves on a footing of perfect equality with each other.

At the marriage of Marie-Antoinette, the nobility who would not acquiesce in the superiority of the dukes, that is to say, of titled men, resisted, with some warmth, the rights which the Queen wanted to establish in favor of the house of Lorraine, and threatened not to go to the dress ball, if the Princess Charlotte of Lorraine was to open the ball. As the resistance was very obstinate, the negotiation upon this trifling subject was of difficult adjustment. At last it was decided that the Princess should enjoy the favor

\* A seat without a back.

which was intended for her, but without establishing a precedent for the future, and only because she was the Queen's relation.

The pride of the princes of Germany, of that last temple of etiquette, of that last asylum of the ancient feudal system, was compelled, on coming to France, to submit to this social levelling. All German princes, though sovereigns at home, were treated in Paris, by French gentlemen, upon a footing of equality. There existed, for instance, no difference between the Prince Max de Deux-Ponts, now King of Bavaria, and the French gentlemen who served or lived in habits of social intercourse with him; this Prince was then in the service of France.

The Electors and many sovereigns, even of the third order, such as the Duke de Deux-Ponts, who would not have been disposed to recognise this equality, but who were, nevertheless, desirous of enjoying the pleasures afforded by a residence at Paris, avoided all difficulty by travelling incognito: it was for this reason that the Duke de Deux-Ponts assumed, during his residence there, the title of Count Sponheim.

The Electors, indeed, had higher pretensions: they thought themselves entitled everywhere to the honors due to royalty, and would not even yield precedence to princes of the blood. Accordingly, they seldom visited France, and their occasional residence there led to serious altercations at court.

The remark I have just made, relative to the



German princes, reminds me of another adventure that occurred to me in consequence of a quarrel, into which the Prince de Nassau forced me with himself, at a dinner given by the Duke de Deux-Ponts, then modestly lodging at the Hôtel du Parlement d'Angleterre, rue Coq-Héron.

To explain the origin of this misunderstanding, it will be necessary to go back a few steps in my narrative.

About a year or two before the period of which I am speaking, I met the Prince de Nassau one morning upon the Terrasse des Feuillans, in the Tuileries; he was walking hastily, and I endeavored in vain to stop him. "I am in great haste," said he, "the Prince F.... de S.... has chosen me for his second in a duel, about to take place immediately, in the Champs-Élysées, between him and the Chevalier de L.... If you would like to witness the conflict, come with me."

I accepted his proposal, being rather curious to see that Prince upon the ground, he having, by his hesitation in affairs of this nature, contrived to acquire a somewhat doubtful reputation in respect to bravery, although there was, perhaps, no man of his day who had fought more frequently than himself.

We proceeded, therefore, from the Tuileries to the principal walk in the Champs-Élysées, where, at some distance before us, we saw two carriages stop, and our champions alight with

their swords. We made all haste to join them, but they were at a considerable distance from us, and there happened to be many persons walking that day; so that, before we could reach the immediate scene of action, we found ourselves separated from them by a numerous crowd of spectators.

Hearing, presently, a great tumult, we ran, and arrived in time to witness the singular termination of the combat: one of the parties held in his hand a fragment of his broken sword, whilst the other was striking him with his. Each was accusing the other of having violated the laws of duelling. One declared that, having fallen in consequence of his foot slipping, and his sword being broken by the accident, his adversary had endeavored to wound him, although disarmed; and would have done so, if his valet had not come to his assistance. The other exclaimed that his antagonist, without giving him time to place himself in a posture of defence, had slightly wounded him in the loins, and that, immediately afterwards, the valet of his said adversary had most unwarrantably interfered in the affray.

The surrounding crowd was too much divided in opinion to clear up the point. On all sides the cry of murder and assassination was raised, but the guilty person was not named. The crowd was every moment increasing, and those who had arrived last, and seen nothing, were not the least loud in their exclamations.

Each of the seconds was defending, with a somewhat partial eagerness, the conduct of his friend ; when, at length, some of the spectators, more prudent than the rest, succeeded in persuading the combatants to put an end to the scandal occasioned by this affair. They were both wounded : their seconds reconducted them to their carriages, and they retired.

This adventure, as may be easily imagined, made a great noise ; it became the common topic of conversation throughout Paris. In the evening, the father of Prince F.... wrote to me, knowing I had been a witness to the scene, to request that I would give him my opinion upon the subject in writing, fully persuaded that it could not but be favorable to the honor of his son.

Prince Nassau urged me strenuously to accede to this request. I, however, declined doing so, alleging, as an excuse, that the seconds of the parties were the only persons competent to describe that extraordinary affair ; and that, mere accident having made me a spectator of it, I was unwilling, especially as I had arrived at the scene of action late, and in the midst of a great tumult, to express upon what I had imperfectly seen and vaguely heard, an opinion disadvantageous to either party. This reply was very unsatisfactory to Nassau, and, from that time, a great coolness had subsisted between us.

We were still upon this footing with each other, when one day we dined together, with

about twenty others, at the table of Prince Max de Deux-Ponts. The dinner was already far advanced, when one of the party invited, M. de S.... B...., a young man possessing a good heart and an excellent understanding, but who had all the ardor and levity natural to his age, entered the dining-room, and, after excusing himself to the master of the house for his late arrival, seated himself by the side of Prince Nassau.

The Prince rallied him upon his want of punctuality ; M. de S.... B.... replied, in the same ironical strain, that he had been detained by a dispute he had just had with a German Prince, whom he had been on the point of throwing out at the window.

Nassau, who was naturally irascible, instead of laughing at so strange a joke, addressed to one German prince at the table of an other, felt piqued, and hastily retorted that, when such an assertion was made, the name of the prince alluded to ought, at least, to be stated. M. de S.... B.... replied, that the misunderstanding had been between himself and the Prince F.... de S....

Perceiving, by the countenance of Nassau, that he was much irritated, I endeavored to appease the incipient altercation by interposing. "M. de S.... B....," I observed, "you are deceived ; Prince F.... would not have submitted to be treated in the way you mention so readily as you suppose. I saw him defend himself,

“some months ago, in the Champs-Élysées, very ably.”

This observation, instead of mitigating the anger of Nassau, as I had hoped, had no other effect than that of rendering me the object of it. “Sir,” said he to me, raising his voice, “as you refused to give any opinion on that affair when your opinion was requested, you would do well now to be silent.” I replied, that it would never be by him that I should submit to have silence dictated to me. The persons between us hastily interrupted the conversation by rendering our voices inaudible.

When dinner was concluded, I went, very unaffectedly, up to Nassau, and said to him, “You addressed me, just now, in offensive language, because anger had deprived you of reflection. You are ten years older than I am : your reputation is firmly established, but too firmly, indeed, by the fame of many an affair of honor ; mine has yet to be determined. You must be conscious that I am entitled to satisfaction, which it is in your power to give in two ways : you can settle the affair in a moment, if so inclined, by merely saying, in the presence of your friends here assembled, that you regret your hastiness of expression, and had no intention of giving me offence. If I do not obtain that satisfaction, you are aware that I must expect one of another kind.”

“I have none to give you,” answered he bluntly. “Very well,” I replied, “to-morrow morning, at

“ seven o’clock, I shall proceed to your house, and  
“ call you to account for your extraordinary conduct.” After these few words were exchanged we separated.

To avoid any unforeseen impediment, I took the precaution of not returning to the house of my relations, but wrote to them that I had occasion to set off immediately for Saint Germain. Viscount Noailles having witnessed the scene I have just described, I requested him to be my second, and proceeded to the residence of another of my friends, the Duke of C . . . , who made me sleep at his house. Viscount Noailles called upon me the next morning, at half after six, to accompany me to Prince de Nassau.

When we arrived at his house, every one in it was asleep, master and servants ; and it was not without difficulty that we succeeded in awaking the porter, obtaining admission, and reaching the chamber of the Prince, who started from his sleep as we abruptly entered his apartment.

He had lost all recollection of what had occurred the preceding day ; every trace of it had vanished with the fumes of the champaign he had drunk. “ To what accident, gentlemen,” said he, “ am I to ascribe this very early visit ? ” “ You must know,” I replied, “ since it was yourself who so desired it.” “ The devil take me,” said he, “ if I know a word about it.”

I was, therefore, compelled to remind him, in a few words, of his unbecoming behaviour. “ You are perfectly right,” he then said, “ I behaved

“ like a madman, the wine had disturbed my  
“ head ; but you must think no more about it ;  
“ and, as Viscount Noailles is here, I declare, in  
“ his presence, that I am your servant, and your  
“ friend, and that I had no intention to offer you  
“ the smallest offence.”

“ All that is very well,” I replied in my turn,  
“ but it is mentioned too late ; I should have been  
“ delighted to receive from you, yesterday, such  
“ an acknowledgment ; but the twenty persons  
“ with whom we dined, are not now present to  
“ hear it ; it is, therefore, no longer sufficient.

“ It is most true,” added he, “ you are right  
“ again : let us fight ; but pray let no animosity  
“ enter into the affair ; let it be merely a sacri-  
“ fice that we make to prejudice, and to a point of  
“ honor.” I pressed his hand in a friendly man-  
ner, and he rose.

He proposed that we should breakfast ; but  
when I replied that I should prefer breakfasting  
after the affair should be decided, he appeared  
somewhat piqued, and said, “ The answer is toler-  
“ ably presumptuous, I think ; we shall see which  
“ of us will be able to breakfast after the affair.”

As soon as he was dressed we went out, and I  
enquired where he proposed to go. “ Oh,” said  
he, “ I have, not far from here, a very convenient  
“ spot for this kind of exercise ;” to which I re-  
plied, that it was easy to see he was accustomed  
to the business.

Stopping then, I observed to him, that I was  
accompanied by my second, whereas he had none,

which was contrary to rule. ‘ Good :’ said he, “ Noailles is our common friend, and a man of honor ; I appoint him as my second, also : he “ is well worth two.”

We walked on till we came into a narrow lane, between two garden walls, when each of us, in a moment, took off his coat and waistcoat, and placed himself on the defensive. Our blades were scarcely crossed, when, casting his eyes upon a large knot of pink ribband appended to the hilt of my sword, he cried, “ That, I suppose, “ is a recent favor from some fair one ; I am “ afraid it portends you success.” “ That we “ shall presently see,” I replied ; upon which we commenced a vigorous attack.

The Prince fought like no other man : he observed none of the rules of fencing, but, being remarkable for strength and agility, he, at one moment, darted forward upon his adversary with the rapidity of a deer, and, at the next, retired from him with the same celerity ; so that it was equally difficult either to parry his rapid strokes, or to reach him in his sudden retreat.

By this method, which surprised me not a little, he had been successful in almost every affair of the kind, in which his impetuosity had involved him ; and, notwithstanding my vigilance and coolness, he several times pierced my shirt, though, fortunately, without touching me, whilst I was vainly stretching myself forward to reach him in my turn.

After a few seconds, however, my sword scratched



his hand, and the blood flowed, upon which I enquired if he was satisfied, and disposed to leave matters as they were. "Satisfied!" said he eagerly, "I was, a short time ago, but am far from being so now; let us go on."

We then continued. His blade, too impetuously urged, missed its aim, and passed my body several times, when, at length, mine took effect on his arm, and broke, at the moment I was about parrying a thrust he made at me in return. "There!" said I, "now we must send for another sword."

"You are both stark mad," cried Viscount Noailles; "for a hasty expression, not injuriously offensive, surely a couple of wounds, and a broken sword may suffice. I vow that the first man of you that refuses to desist shall have to do with me."

We laughed at this sally. "Upon my word," said Nassau, "he is right, and I feel it the more sensibly as my hand begins to refuse its office." "Well," said I, "shall we embrace, and consider the thing as settled?" "With all my heart" replied he, "on condition that we engage, upon honor, happen what may, never to fight each other again, but to remain brothers in arms for life." We then embraced, and the affair terminated.

I should not have related so much in detail an adventure concerning only myself, were it not that it afterwards became one of the causes of

some remarkable occurrences ; but it will be seen in the sequel that Nassau, being in Poland when I was in Russia, true to our sworn fraternity, I obtained for him from the Empress, whom he had never seen and who was even prejudiced against him, the gift of an estate in the Crimea, and permission to transport to the Black Sea under Russian colors the products of his dominions in Poland. Out of gratitude for these favors he offered to serve Her Majesty against the Turks ; and having been promoted by her to the command of her fleets, he burned that of the Capitan-Pacha in the Borysthènes,\* and in the north defeated the squadrons of the King of Sweden ; so true it is that the greatest events, are frequently produced by the most insignificant causes !

From the originality of his character, Prince Nassau might be truly regarded as a kind of moral phenomenon in an age and country in which long civilization had established something like a general resemblance between all kinds of dispositions, at least as far as regarded language and manners.

In gay society especially, by continual mixture and collision, the native stamp of each individual character had been effaced ; as fashion was every thing, every thing was uniform. Opinion and expressions were brought down to the level of usage ; language, conduct, all was ac-

\* Or Dnieper.

according to rule ; and even though internally different, every one wore outwardly the same mask, assumed the same tone and the same appearance.

Prince Nassau, on the contrary, presented to our observation an incongruous mixture of the most opposite qualities, and resembled nothing human but himself. His mind was but little cultivated, he was deficient in imagination, spoke little, and, at the first approach, seemed distinguished by the most chilling coldness. Yet, was there perhaps no man better calculated than himself to succeed in attaining the objects of his desires ; for he desired energetically, and observed an un-deviating consistency in all his measures and projects.

He was always in want of money, of which, heedless of the future, he was prodigal beyond measure. Three times he ruined himself, and as often did fate and his bravery retrieve his fortune.

This man, with all his external frigidity of demeanor, would take fire at a word ; his apparent mildness was convertible in a moment into rage. Devoted as he was to women, to gaming, to luxury, to all the pleasures of the capital, he could quit them all without regret at the first sound of the trumpet or of war. Preferring Paris to every other residence, he was eternally quitting it to wander over the four quarters of the world ; of which he made the circuit with Bougainville.

Systematically and studiously voluptuous, he

could bear without difficulty the inclemencies of every climate, fatigue of every description and privations of every kind. Wherever amusement or fighting was the object of pursuit, he was sure to be found. He was the courtier of all courts, the warrior of every camp, and the knight of all adventures.

He successively distinguished himself by hunting tigers in another hemisphere, by attacking the English at Gibraltar, by swimming away from his floating battery, when on fire, by destroying a Turkish squadron near Oczakow, by engaging with various success the Swedes in the Arctic Seas, and afterwards by carrying his arms and his property into Germany for the relief of the emigrants.

Finally, to complete the catalogue of moral contrarieties which distinguished him, this man, haughty and adventurous as he was when instigated by the pursuit of glory, or even by a simple point of honor, became but too pliant, and yielding at court; the inflexible champion sinking at once ingloriously into the crowd of mere sycophants, to obtain the favor of princes.

The revolution prevented him from sustaining to the end the character which nature had fitted him to perform. The circumstances of that political tempest were such as to make it impossible for him to shine in connexion with either party. It placed him indeed in a false position; for his thirst for adventures and danger, as well

as his ardent impetuosity of disposition should have placed him in the first rank of Frenchmen, of republicans and of imperialists, whilst his name and rank, his habits and prejudices retained him in the midst of the coalition, whose methodical slowness of proceeding was incompatible with his enterprising genius.

Two days after our meeting, Prince Nassau appeared at the Queen's ball with his arm in a sling. Our adventure became public, and that extraordinary epoch being distinguished by a confused mixture of galantry, knight-errantry and philosophy, this little affair procured for me, not only the regard of that numerous class of men who were foremost in boasting of combating established prejudices, but a distinguished reception from the ladies.

The winter was passed in balls and sports and pastimes of every description: all Frenchmen resembled at that time those young Neapolitans who laugh, sing and sleep unconcernedly upon the lava at the brink of a volcano. But who could be expected to foresee horrible calamities in the midst of peace and prosperity! How was it possible to anticipate that tremendous overflow of passions and of crimes that was soon to overwhelm us, at a time when all that was written, all that was said, all that was done, had no other object than the extirpation of vice, the encouragement of virtue, the abolition of arbitrary dominion, the relief of the people, the advancement of commerce and agriculture: in a

word, the general amelioration of human society !

A King, young, virtuous and beneficent, who had no other wish than the happiness of his subjects, who desired no authority beyond that which the exercise of justice might confer upon him, gave, by his example, increased energy to all these generous and philanthropic ideas.

He had selected, as his ministers, the very two men whom the public voice designated as the best informed, the most disinterested, the most virtuous. Every principle of toleration and rational liberty was recognised and encouraged by them. Constant friends of upright principles and equally courageous enemies of abuses, they accomplished, in conjunction with their monarch, the wishes of that sage of antiquity who predicted that *real happiness would only begin to exist upon earth, when true philosophy should be seated on the throne.*

The unjust persecution of the protestants had every where ceased ; the fiscality of the corporations had been suppressed ; the system of forced labor\* had been discontinued ; every trace of servitude was disappearing ; humiliating privileges were no longer claimed or exercised ; in short the antiquated feudal maxim had been voted obsolete which declared : “ That no nobleman is bound to pay any tax, or to perform any degrading forced labor ; and that no

\* *Corvée*, labor which the vassal was obliged to perform for his Lord.—*Translator.*

“ person is subject to forced labor unless he be  
“ a plebeian and liable to taxation.”\*

With such ministers, a mild, gradual and salutary reform might have saved us from the horrors of a revolution ; but such a system of philosophy can rarely be maintained with safety in opposition to the powerful classes who live but upon privileges and abuses, and who would be deprived of almost all their enjoyments and their splendor, if merit alone led to fortune, and if justice were substituted for arbitrary power.

The court, almost always more powerful than royalty itself, became alarmed at the projects of the two ministers, and assailed them with all the weapons that interest and intrigue could supply.

The King was a worthy but a weak man ; though fully coinciding with the views and sentiments of Turgot, he had not the firmness to support him, he dismissed him, and lamented having done so. Malesherbes desirous of sharing the fate of a colleague in every respect so worthy of him, tendered his resignation. Nevertheless, among the ministers, who succeeded them, none but meritorious individuals were to be found ; for none but such could be proposed to Louis XVI.

The appointment of M. Necker to the head of the finance department was a great and remark-

\* *Qu'aucun noble n'est tenu de payer taille, ni de faire de viles corvées ; et que nul n'est corréable, s'il n'est vilain et taillable.*

able innovation ; it bore the stamp of the peculiar spirit of the times ; and it was the first time since the reign of Henri IV, that a protestant had been permitted to occupy a seat in the councils of our Kings.

The most rancorous envy could not, with any semblance of plausibility deny to M. Necker the possession of a truly noble character, an elevated mind and brilliant eloquence ; but, on the other hand, he was, as well as the King, stronger in principles than in actions.

Both of them, judging of men as they ought to be, and not as they are, persuaded themselves with too much ease that, to wish to do good, is to effect it ; and that, to deserve the love of the people, is to obtain it. They were not acquainted with the logic of the passions, and had yet to learn that, with regard to the mass of mankind, nothing is more opposed to their real interests than their self-love.

Admitted as I was, when still very young, to an intimate acquaintance with M. Necker and his wife, I can with truth assert, that it was impossible to listen to him without being impressed by his sentiments, and inspired with respect for his character. In his house was found a degree of simplicity and virtue which presented a singular phenomenon in the midst of a brilliant court and a corrupted metropolis.

At this epoch, so different from the present time, long custom had excluded our youth from all management of public affairs. That maturity



of age which if it does not always bestow discretion, at least confers the reputation of it, was a necessary qualification in matters of politics and legislation. For this reason it must not be expected that, in the following reminiscences, I shall appear as an actor in those events which were then in preparation, which succeeded each other, and which, after holding out the prospect of so much happiness, plunged us into so many misfortunes.

In the greater number of those political scenes, which ended in the overthrow of Europe, I was placed, not upon the theatre itself, but in the first rank of the spectators, and was thus exposed to all the illusion of the scene. I was delighted with the enthusiasm excited by the new ideas of reform, improvement, liberty, toleration, and legal equality.

It was, however, more than once my fortune to obtain a very near view of several of the principal personages, and even to get behind the scenes; but these fortuitous circumstances increased instead of dissipating the fascination. It was indeed impossible to pass evenings at the house of D'Alembert to frequent the Hôtel de la Rochefoucauld, with the friends of Turgot, to be admitted to the breakfasts of the abbé Raynal, to enjoy the society of M. de Malesherbes and his family; in fine, to approach the most amiable of Queens, and the most virtuous of Kings, without being induced to believe that

we were about to enter on a kind of golden age, of which preceding times could afford us no idea.

Yet, at this period, some circumstances, which soon after occurred with greater frequency, would, if more closely observed, have been sufficient to undeceive the minds of more experienced spectators. A rapid succession of events ought to have opened our eyes, and we should then have seen too clearly on one side, the imminent crisis which was approaching, the impetuosity of those innovating passions which were every where propagated, the terrific jealousy which animated the plebeian order against the nobility and clergy, and the irritation evinced by the latter ; and, on the other side, the inefficiency of the pilots on whom the task devolved of directing our course through so many dangers.

In point of fact, the ministers of Louis XV had already disgracefully acquiesced in the dismemberment of Poland by Russia, Prussia, and Austria ; an unfortunate event of which the evil consequences were two-fold. In the first place, it destroyed the balance of power, established by the treaty of Westphalia ; it added considerably to the strength of three states, already very formidable, whilst England, on the other hand, had acquired a vast preponderance by the conquest of India ; and France, which had hitherto stood in the first rank of monarchies, was degraded to the second. In the next place, it substituted the law of expediency for the law of

nations, since an unoffending state had been thus dismembered without any kind of pretext, and by this injustice, a door had been opened for the violations of all engagements, of all rights and of all moral duties.

The same incapacity seemed always to paralyse our counsels both at home and abroad. Russia, ever active and steady in her ambitious views, soon seized upon the Crimea. In vain did Austria, for the second time, attempt to engage France in the task of opposing a barrier to such encroachments. In vain did the Emperor Joseph, when he visited Paris, redouble his solicitations, and announce the danger with which Europe was threatened by the gigantic growth of the Russian colossus. The love of repose, the disorder of our finances and the timidity which prevented the adoption of the measure of laying imposts on the clergy by which their re-establishment would have been effected, overcame all other considerations.

The result was, that Austria finding herself unable alone to maintain a struggle with Russia, changed her system of politics, and connected herself more closely with the cabinet of St. Petersburg; and France, consequently, lost in a great degree her preponderance in Germany, and the influence which she had been there accustomed to exercise over powers of the second and third order, which, until this time, had relied upon her protection.

In the mean time, liberty, which throughout

the civilized world had slumbered for so many centuries, awakened in another hemisphere, and combated with glory against a long established domination, supported by the most formidable power.

England, proud of her strength, of her numerous fleets and her riches, had taken into her pay, and transported to America forty thousand men, in order to stifle that liberty, whilst yet in its cradle ; but in vain. An entire nation which resolves to be free, is not easily vanquished.

The courage displayed by these new republicans procured for them, throughout Europe, the esteem and the good wishes of every friend of justice and humanity. The rising generation, above all, taught, by a singular contrast, in the midst of monarchies, to admire the great writers and the heroes of Greece and Rome, carried to an enthusiastic excess the interest with which they were inspired by the American revolution.

The French government, which sought every means of diminishing the power of England, was insensibly induced to act in conformity with these liberal opinions, which manifested themselves with so much animation. It even secretly furnished succour of arms, ammunition and money to the Americans, or allowed them to be furnished through the medium of its commerce. But, in consequence of its weakness, it did not venture to declare itself openly ; affected on the contrary to maintain an impartial neutrality ; and deceived itself so far as to believe that its secret intrigues could not be detected, and that it could

ruin its rival without running the risk of a conflict with her. Such a deception could not long continue, and the English cabinet had too much penetration to allow the French government thus to reap all the advantages of war without incurring its dangers.

The system actually pursued by the French ministers, became every day more apparent. American deputies, Siléas Deane and Arthur Lee, arrived in Paris; and the celebrated Benjamin Franklin was soon after added to their number. It would be difficult to describe the eagerness and the delight with which these men, the agents of a people in a state of insurrection against their monarch, were received in France, in the bosom of an ancient monarchy.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the luxury of our capital, the elegance of our fashions, the magnificence of Versailles, the still brilliant remains of the monarchical pride of Louis XIV, and the polished and superb dignity of our nobility, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the almost rustic apparel, the plain but firm demeanor, the free and direct language of the envoys, whose antique simplicity of dress and appearance seemed to have introduced within our walls, in the midst of the effeminate and servile refinement of the 18th century, some sages contemporary with Plato, or republicans of the age of Cato and of Fabius.

This unexpected apparition produced upon us a greater effect, in consequence of its novelty, and

of its occurring precisely at the period when literature and philosophy had circulated amongst us an universal desire for reforms, a disposition to encourage innovations, and the seeds of an ardent attachment to liberty.

The clash of arms, moreover, had given an additional stimulus to the warlike inclinations of our youth. We were irritated at the tardy circumspection of our ministry ; we had become weary of an irksome peace, which had lasted more than ten years, and every heart beat with the desire of retrieving the disgrace of the last war, of taking the field against England, and of flying to the aid of America.

This impatience was further heightened by the attempts of the government to repress it ; for the general effect of restraint is to give increased force to the object of control. Sanctioned by the authority of long usage, and by the memory of our ancestors, who, whilst our kings maintained a national peace, had often gone forth in search of adventures and military employment, and had displayed their valor, at one time in the Spanish and Italian service against the Saracens, at another, in the armies of Austria, against the invasions of the Turks, we now eagerly sought the means of transporting ourselves, individually, across the Atlantic, to be ranged under the banners of American freedom.

The delegates from Congress had not yet been officially recognised as diplomatic agents ; an audience had not been granted by the sovereign ;

and the minister conducted his negotiations with them through intermediate channels. But the most distinguished individuals of the capital and the court, the most celebrated philosophers, scholars, and men of letters, daily frequented their habitations. To their own writings and influence they ascribed the successful progress of liberal opinions in the New World, and their secret aspirations were to see themselves, at a future day, the legislators of Europe, as their rivals already were of America.

Influenced by a different motive, the young officers of the French army, who breathed only war, were constant in their attendance on the American envoys, and urged their inquiries on the situation of affairs, the forces of Congress, the means of defence, and the various intelligence regularly received from that great theatre, on which liberty was maintaining so valorous a combat against the tyranny of Great Britain.

What added considerably to our esteem, our confidence and our admiration, was the good faith and the simplicity with which the deputies, disdaining all diplomatic artifice, made us acquainted with the frequent and successive reverses experienced by their yet undisciplined troops; for, at this early stage of the contest, the numbers and tactics of the English gave them a temporary triumph over the bravery of the Americans, yet unskilled in the profession of arms.

It was not concealed from us, by Silcas Deane

and Arthur Lee, that the assistance of some well informed officers would be at once acceptable and useful to their country. They even went so far as to say that they were authorized to promise to such as were inclined to embrace their cause, military rank proportioned to their services.

In the ranks of the American forces were already to be found several European volunteers, whom the love of glory and of independence had invited thither. Amongst these, two Poles, whose names will live in history, were particularly distinguished, one was the brave Pulawski, and the other, the illustrious Kosciusko, who subsequently succeeded in breaking, for a season, the chains of his native land, and who was not subdued, until he had, by numerous engagements and splendid victories, shaken the gigantic power of the oppressor. Another eminent officer was Major Fleury, who, by his talents and his enterprising genius, reflected credit on his country.

The three Frenchmen, distinguished by their rank at court, who first offered their military services to the Americans, were the Marquis de La Fayette, the Viscount de Noailles, and myself. We had long been intimate friends, and our connection, which was strengthened by a great conformity of opinions, was soon after confirmed by the ties of blood.

La Fayette and the Viscount de Noailles had married two daughters of the Duke de Noailles, then bearing the title of Duke d'Ayen; their



mother, the Dutchess d'Ayen, was the daughter, by his first marriage, of M. d'Aguesseau, Counsellor of State, and son of the Chancellor of that name M. d'Aguesseau had, by a second wife, twenty years after, several children, one of whom was M. d'Aguesseau, now a peer of France, a daughter, married to M. de Saron, first President of the Parliament of Paris, and another daughter, to whom I was united in the spring of 1777; so that, by this alliance, I became the uncle of my two friends.

We all three entered into an engagement of secrecy, with respect to our arrangements with the American commissioners, in order to obtain time to ascertain the disposition of our court, and to provide the means requisite for the execution of our purpose. The conformity which prevailed in all our sentiments, opinions and desires, unfortunately, did not, at that time, extend to our fortunes. The Viscount de Noailles and myself were dependent upon our parents, and only possessed the income which they assigned to us. La Fayette, on the contrary, although younger, and inferior in rank to ourselves, found himself, by a singular chance, at the age of nineteen years, sole master of his property, and of his person, and the independent possessor of a hundred thousand livres a year.

Our ardor was too great to be long confined within the bounds of discretion. We imparted our design to some young men, whom we hoped to engage in the same enterprise. It came to

the knowledge of the court, and the minister, apprehensive that the departure to America of volunteers, distinguished by their rank, and who, it could not be supposed, would take that step without his permission, might open the eyes of England to the views which he still wished to conceal, gave us formal orders to abandon our intention.

Our parents, to whom our design had been hitherto a secret, now took the alarm, and warmly reproached us for our rash spirit of adventure. I was particularly struck with the surprise manifested by the relations of La Fayette. This circumstance afforded me the more amusement, as it proved the very imperfect knowledge of his character, which, until that time, they possessed.

At every period of life, and, above all, in his youth, La Fayette displayed a cold and grave exterior, which sometimes gave to his demeanor an air of timidity and embarrassment, which did not really belong to him. His reserved manners, and his silent disposition, presented a singular contrast to the petulance, the levity, and the ostentatious loquacity of persons of his own age ; but, under this exterior, to all appearance so phlegmatic, he concealed the most active mind, the most determined character, and the most enthusiastic spirit.

Of this fact I was better enabled to judge than others. During the preceding winter he had become attached to a lady as amiable as she was

beautiful, and, having erroneously conceived an idea that I was his rival, in a fit of jealousy he had put aside all consideration of our friendship, and had passed the greater part of the night with me, endeavoring to prevail on me to decide by the sword which of us should be the favored suitor of a lady to whom I made no pretensions.

Some days after our quarrel and reconciliation, I could not refrain from laughing when I heard the Marshal de Noailles, and other individuals of his family, intreat me to use my influence with him to animate his torpidity, to rouse him from his inaction, and to communicate some animation to his character. It may easily be conceived what was their astonishment when they suddenly learned that this young sage of nineteen, so cool and so indifferent, had been so far carried away by the love of glory and of danger, as to intend to cross the ocean, and fight in the cause of American freedom.

The order by which we were prohibited from pursuing our great undertaking, naturally produced upon us very different effects. The Viscount de Noailles and myself were filled with consternation, because we were, by this means, deprived of all liberty and power of acting; but it only irritated La Fayette, who, well aware that he possessed every thing necessary to the success of his design, resolved to disregard the injunction.

He, however, at first disguised his senti-

ments, and appeared, like us, to acquiesce ; but, after the lapse of two months, he entered my chamber, one morning at seven o'clock, in haste, carefully closed the door, and seating himself at my bed-side, accosted me thus: "I am going to America ; no one knows it ; but I love you too well to set off without entrusting you with the secret." " And how have you been able," I replied, " to secure your passage ?"

He then informed me that having, under a plausible pretext, taken a journey out of France, he had purchased a vessel, which was to wait for him in a Spanish port ; he had armed it, put on board an able crew, and filled it not only with arms and ammunition, but with a considerable number of officers, who had consented to share his fortunes. Amongst these officers were found, M. de Ternan, a brave and well informed soldier, and M. de Valfort, who enjoyed a high reputation, founded on his long experience, his strict probity, and his profound knowledge. At a subsequent period my father confided to him the superintendence of the Ecole-Militaire, by which he became the principal instructor of Napoleon Bonaparte. These two officers had been pointed out to La Fayette by the Marshal de Broglie, to whom he had imparted his design.

There was no necessity for me to explain, at great length, to my friend the regret I felt at not being able to accompany him ; his perception of it was as keen as my own : but we indulged the hope

that war would soon be declared between Great Britain and France, and that all obstacles to our reunion would then be removed.

After having admitted the Viscount de Noailles also into his confidence, La Fayette speedily left Paris. His departure was a source of great affliction to his family, who were much grieved, not only by his preparing to encounter so many dangers, but also by his sacrificing, in the cause of a distant land, a large portion of his fortune. His wife alone, although she suffered most, loved him too well not to partake his sentiments, and to approve his generous resolution.

The court was quickly apprized of his disobedience, and gave instant orders for his arrest, which were carried into execution. Thus, my unfortunate friend, after making so many sacrifices, saw himself deprived of his liberty, at the very moment when he was setting off to defend that of another hemisphere.

By great good fortune, he succeeded, a few days afterwards, in eluding the vigilance of his guards ; he passed the Pyrenees, and joined, on the coast of Spain, his vessel and his companions in arms, who had given up all hopes of seeing him again. He set sail, arrived, without any accident, in America, and met with a reception which was justly due to his noble and generous conduct.

As his modesty proved to be equal to his energy, and his prudence to his intrepidity, he won the esteem and the confidence of the Ame-

ricans to such a degree, that, forgetting his age, they dwelt only on his excellent qualities ; and Washington, who fully appreciated his merit, entrusted him, a few years afterwards, with the command of a division, and with the task of carrying on, at the head of this corps, a defensive war, an operation which, of all others, requires the most experience, sagacity, and skill.

Yet fortune, before she conferred these favors upon him, had subjected him to severe trials ; for, at the commencement of his career, he met only with disasters. The first engagement in which he distinguished himself, that of Brandy-Wine, was decided in favor of the enemy. He there received a severe wound ; a ball passed through his leg ; an accident which did not prevent him from persisting, for some time, in his heroic efforts to rally the Americans.

Philadelphia soon fell into the hands of the British, but La Fayette was endowed with those qualities of mind which alone render celebrity permanent, firmness in reverses, perseverance and confidence in the future. Like his master, Washington, he might be conquered, but he could not be discouraged.

I recognised his true character in the letters which he addressed to me after this ill-omened commencement of so brilliant a career. But, under the banners of liberty, in a republican camp, and almost under the eyes of the Congress, he shewed, in a single instance, by an ebullition of courage truly chivalric, that he had

not entirely renounced the feelings and manners of our young French heroes.

The Earl of Carlisle had published in America a proclamation, which contained some expressions reflecting upon France. As the champion of French honor, La Fayette sent a challenge to the Earl, and defied him to single combat. Lord Carlisle replied with much discretion, and refused the invitation, observing: "That the quarrels of nations would give birth to too much disorder, if they were allowed to excite individual animosities."

As soon as Paris rang with reports of the first battles in which La Fayette and his companions in arms had raised the reputation of the French name, the approbation of his conduct became general. The very persons who had most blamed his rash adventure applauded him; the court itself appeared to be proud of his achievements, and he became the great object of envy to our young men. Thus, public opinion, declaring itself still more exclusively in favor of war, rendered it inevitable, and drew after it, as a matter of course, a government which had not strength enough to resist the impulse.

In conformity with this view, the old Count de Maurepas, the first minister, said more than once to my father, that it was the impetuous ardor of the young courtiers and officers which had overcome the wiser deliberations of the council of state, and, in a manner, compelled the government to declare war.

However this may be, for a long time after, the slow circumspection of the ministry deceived our expectations, and they continued, according to their custom, to communicate, in a pacific tone, with the cabinet of London, whilst they secretly negotiated with the American envoys.

This protracted indecision was a cause of great vexation to me and to those who shared my sentiments. But, fortunately, at the age of twenty-three, and in Paris, the vortex of the fashionable world, military duties and occupations, varied as they are numerous, present a young man with abundant means of bearing disappointments.

In the spring time of life every adverse occurrence is cheerfully submitted to, because every thing is seen through the medium of hope, which invests the future with the most brilliant and smiling aspect.

I quitted Paris, in the course of the winter, to enjoy a pleasure then new to me; that of being introduced to and commanding the regiment of dragoons of which I was the lieutenant colonel.

The sight of our arms, and our military exercises, presented me with an image of war, and prepared me to expect the reality. Another, and a more attractive pursuit, soon absorbed all my attention. On the 30th of April, 1777, I married Mademoiselle d'Aguesseau, and my ideas of glory were easily overpowered by impressions of a softer and not less lively nature.

Notwithstanding the happiness I derived from this union, I could not be induced to forget my



military duties, and, at the end of May, I repaired to Douai, where the regiment of Orleans was then placed in garrison.

For some years past, the spirit of innovation, of reform, and of amelioration, had been gaining ground in the army, its administration and its tactics, as it had done in all other affairs.

This is not the proper place to introduce an historical account of the successive revolutions of the military system in modern Europe. I shall only here observe, in a few words, that, for a long period, our ancestors the Franks, who borrowed from the vanquished Gauls a knowledge of the Roman tactics, owed to this science, which gave regularity to their manœuvres, and a proper direction to their courage, their first and great success at Tolbiac, and, subsequently, their numerous victories over the Germans, the Saracens and the Saxons, who successively attempted to make themselves masters of France.

We learn from the history of Charlemagne, that, if he had not preserved some traces of this ancient military system, all his genius would not have been able to overcome the obstinate and ferocious valor of the Saxons. He conquered almost all Europe, not because he was the bravest warrior of his time, but because he was the most skilful.

The wealth possessed by the princes, the dukes, the counts and other military vassals, had, at this time, introduced a remarkable change in the mode of carrying on war; the greater number

disdained to fight on foot ; and the cavalry had gained an ascendancy over the infantry in the general estimation. The system of warfare was thus altered, and armies lost, by degrees, their infantry, in which consisted their principal force.

Under the successors of Charlemagne, this contempt of the infantry increased daily : all the rules of tactics were forgotten ; a few peasants and artisans, badly equipped, alone composed the infantry, whose contemptible force was hardly taken into the account in the day of battle. The lords, their vassals, and subvassals, the knights, their squires, and their men at arms, composed a numerous, high-spirited, and magnificent body of horse, which carried on the war without plan, and fought without regard to order. Every thing depended on personal courage, and nothing upon skill.

A great battle might be properly described as consisting, at this period, of ten thousand simultaneous duels. The military operations might be called invasions, or excursions, rather than campaigns. The service exacted from the troops lasted only forty days ; it was impossible to achieve any great conquest ; and, as long as this feudal chaos continued, each nation, occupied with its internal wars, was prevented from becoming formidable to others. The power of fanaticism alone created, swelled, and poured into the east a prodigious torrent of warriors, which, from every country of Europe, spread itself with fury over Asia. Several millions of men there perished,

and a small number of illustrious adventurers alone, succeeded in acquiring a few principalities, of which the Saracens, in the course of a short time, dispossessed them.

Constantinople, lost by the weakness of a cowardly despot, and taken by assault by our knights, remained only fifty years under the Latin empire, which the irregular forces of the feudal lords were inadequate to defend.

At last our monarchs, weary of so many disorders, and having become powerful in domains which were laid waste by the attacks of banditti, the revolt of cities, the discords of the great lords, and the invasions of the English, began to levy and pay bands of regular soldiers, since they could no longer depend on the fidelity of their vassals.

The discovery of gun-powder, soon after, effected a great change in tactics, and in the destiny of nations. A formidable infantry re-appeared in our armies. Insurrections became almost impossible. Fortified towns alone could present an effectual resistance to authority, and the greater number of these were in the possession of the sovereign. Those which were held by the nobles, were, by degrees, wrested from them. The power of the state was concentrated and united in the person of the monarch.

The exploits of the Lansquenets, and, above all, those of the Swiss, gave demonstrative proof of the innumerable advantages to be derived from the use of infantry, which had been so long held

in contempt. At length, a great genius, Gustavus Adolphus, arose in the North, who introduced a revolution in tactics. At once ardent and profound, this celebrated captain succeeded, with fifteen thousand men only, by the skilfulness of his manœuvres, and by the able disposition of his force, in subduing almost all the warlike states of Germany in the course of a short time. The Swedish infantry then acquired the same celebrity as was enjoyed in ancient times, by the Macedonian phalanx.

After the death of Gustavus, all the princes of Europe adopted his military system. During the glorious reign of Louis XIV, the great men who were the ornament of that age, brought the new tactics to perfection. Vauban carried to its highest point the science of sieges, and of the defence of fortified towns. Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, and Villars, excited as much admiration by the sagacity of their plans, and by the excellence of their manœuvres, as by the boldness and rapidity of their movements.

Yet it was in vain that Folard, Feuquiere, Vauban, Montécuculi, and Puysegur, displayed their learning, in laying down the rules which so many great captains carried into execution with brilliant effect ; it was in vain that the arts and the sciences contributed, on every side, by their discoveries, to the methodical progress of the art of war and destruction ; our armies were still very far from equalling those which, in the present age, astonish Europe.

There still remained too many traces of the manners and disorders of ancient times. Notwithstanding the armies were but small, the finances of the monarch were still scarcely capable of supporting them. When a great crisis occurred, it was yet necessary to have recourse to the *ban* and the *arrière-ban*, the last relics of the feudal system.

During the early part of the reign of Louis XV the equipments of the troops were not uniform; and, even at a later period, we have seen marshals, as, for instance, the Maréchal de Contades, appear without his uniform, and wearing a large wig. The strict regulations, with regard to uniform, were of later date; yet, in spite of them, we have known the officers of the French guards to mount guard at Versailles, dressed in black, with their gorget on the breast.

It was difficult to establish a rigorous discipline, and a good system of instruction. The rank of officers belonged, of right, to the provincial nobility, who were very proud, with a strong spirit of insubordination, and, for the most part, destitute of information.

The superior ranks in the army were reserved, with few exceptions, for the sons of the great nobles and courtiers, who were called *men of quality*. Far from insisting that some degree of study and experience should form a necessary qualification for these appointments, it was the custom to confer the rank of colonel upon mere infants.

My father, then one of the least favored individuals of the court, was, at nineteen years of age, colonel of the regiment of Soissonnais, and was wounded whilst commanding it, at the battle of Rocoux. The Duc de Fronsac, son of the Maréchal de Richelieu, was appointed, at the age of seven, colonel of the regiment of Septimanie : the major was only five years older than himself.

Yet, it must be confessed, that, generally speaking, the places of lieutenant-colonel and major, were conferred on officers of distinguished intelligence. In point of fact, there existed no general administration of the corps ; each captain regulated his own company, which he recruited, equipped and managed according to his ability.

By the misfortunes of the seven years' war, our eyes were slowly opened ; and the government felt the necessity of adopting the rules of that administration and those tactics, by which Frederic the Great had been enabled to triumph over the three principal powers of Europe.

The decrees of the Duc de Choiseul abolished the greater part of the old abuses. Our manœuvres became regular ; more extensive information was required from the officers ; the army was subjected to the most severe discipline and the strictest subordination. A prudent military administration remedied all disorders ; and established, in the equipments, recruitings, arming and remounting, a beneficial economy, and in dress, the most perfect uniformity. Such was

the new order of things at the moment when I entered the service.

The favor bestowed upon those colonels whose regiments were best informed and disciplined, and the promotion obtained by the officers, who distinguished themselves in the theoretical schools and in their exercises, excited throughout all France a general emulation, and all eagerly contended for the possession of this new prize.

The colonels of regiments exerted themselves to surpass each other in the fine order of their troops, as well as in the regularity, and the promptitude of executing difficult manœuvres, the greater part of which were, perhaps in reality, better calculated to produce a shewy effect on the parade, than to contribute to victory on the field.

Self-love exaggerates every thing, several commanders of corps, whom it was usual to denominate *faiseurs*, harassed their soldiers by minute details, and their officers by a severity more rigid than just. The lessons taken from the school of Frederic, were in every respect, such as, whilst they were the least essential, were the most easy, great care had been taken to learn the trifling secrets which improve and regulate the movements of small bodies of men, but the great principles which communicate a pervading identity and a sure direction to the movements of an army, were still unknown.

The Comte de Muy, whose virtues and upright

rigour, commanded respect, had confined himself to the severe preservation of the order which he found already established. His successor the Comte de Saint-Germain, an enemy to abuses, to luxury and to the caprices of favor, attacked the court, suppressed the privileged corps, which drained the treasury and were rarely serviceable in war, but were cherished by the nobility, who found in them their own advantage.

Desirous of establishing in our camps the German discipline which was incompatible with our manners, the Comte de Saint-Germain subjected the French soldier to the humiliating endurance of corporal punishment; but the order was obeyed with repugnance and inefficiently. I even recollect to have seen at Lille, the grenadiers of a regiment of four battalions shed tears of indignation at the foot of their colors, and the Duc de la Vauguyon, their colonel, mingle his tears with theirs.

This discontent became general; and the minister was overthrown by public opinion which had now acquired a formidable power. The Prince de Montbarrey succeeded to the office, but effected nothing useful. His incapacity even allowed depredations to be committed, of the existence of which he was perhaps ignorant.

My father, as will be presently seen, next assumed the office; but it was in the years which immediately preceded his appointment, that those ideas of reform, innovation and perfection, be-



gan to manifest themselves, which seemed to have become indispensable to the happiness of the French people.

The Comte de Guibert, a soldier full of military order, intelligence and knowledge, thirsting after glory of every description, who had, whilst still young, arrived at superior rank by his activity, and attained a seat in the French academy by his talents, published an Essay on Tactics, which, from the great and new ideas it contained, acquired a rapid celebrity.

At the same time a Prussian major named the Baron de Pyrch visited France, and proposed to the minister to instruct the troops in the rules of the Prussian exercise in all their developments, and in the principles of the great manœuvres of Frederick.

At the same period another officer named the Baron de Mesnil-Durand, professing a new theory, that of deep ranks, attacked the system of extended lines, which had for a long time been universally adopted by the European armies.

All these different systems gained ground by their novelty and became the object of great curiosity and even of bitter quarrels; the government increased this irritation by issuing orders to try to ascertain the merits of each of these plans.

From what has been said it will be seen that a great fermentation existed; that animated disputes sprung up on every side on philosophy,

religion, power, liberty and tactics; even music itself gave rise to an active war between the French and Italian schools, and Paris was at one time divided into two factions, vehemently exasperated against each other that of the *Gluckistes* and that of the *Piccinistes*.

There was nothing that was not brought into question; and this universal agitation served as a prelude to those terrific shocks which convulsed and still continue to convulse the whole world.

When, at certain periods, we behold a perfect calm, approaching almost to lethargy, prevailing amongst nations, whilst, at others, they seem to be agitated and driven as it were into phrensy, we feel inclined to adopt the belief that, in the moral as in the physical world, there must exist paralysis and accesses of violent fever above our power to explain or to remedy.

France, at the close of the eighteenth century, was manifestly laboring under such an attack of feverish restlessness and anxiety, the usual signs and precursors of a great moral, religious and political crisis.

When I recall to mind the incredible activity that prevailed on all sides, in provoking, in multiplying and in resisting the most trifling innovations no less than the greatest, and the amazing importance then attached to them by every one, I must conclude that in the eyes of calm spectators, before becoming quite so dramatic, so tragic and terrible as we have subsequently

shewn ourselves, we must have appeared sufficiently ridiculous.

This will perhaps be better exemplified by a short anecdote. When there was issued an order of M. de Saint-Germain to change the mode of discipline by inflicting upon French soldiers the corporal punishment of blows with the flat of a sabre, the whole court, city and army disputed bitterly either for or against such an innovation; some applauded it, others as warmly reviled it; but citizens, soldiers, abbés and even the women all agreed in talking and arguing eagerly upon the point.

All such as admired the German discipline with as much enthusiasm as they had before displayed in favor of the English fashions, now contended that, with the strokes of the flat of a sabre, our army would shortly arrive at as high a pitch of perfection as that of the great Frederick; while their opponents considered it only as a degrading humiliation, altogether incompatible with French honor. A third party expressed only surprise and doubt;—"Certainly," they said, "a stick would be a humiliating application, " but the sabre is an honorable weapon, and this " military punishment has nothing degrading in it, " it is merely necessary to determine whether it " is preferable to imprisonment and the guard- " house, so detrimental to health and morals."—In short, it became a grave question to ascertain in what precise degree physical punishment might influence a soldier's passions, and induce him to

abandon his vices, his indolence and insubordination.

One morning, a young man belonging to one of the first families at court, entered my room ; I had been intimate with him from my infancy. Having long renounced serious employment, he was wholly occupied with pleasures, play and women. Of late, however, a military ardour had seized him, he dreamed of nothing but arms and horses, the school of theory, and German evolutions and discipline.

I observed as he came in, that he looked astonishingly serious. He begged me to send away my valet, which I did, when we were alone :—  
“ What am I to think,” said I, “ of so early a visit  
“ and so grave a face, this morning, my dear Vi-  
“ comte? Is it some new affair of honor or of love?”  
“ Nothing of the kind,” he replied ; “ but  
“ still it is a very important object, that I have  
“ in view, and I am resolved to bring the mat-  
“ ter to a proof. It may possibly appear odd to  
“ you ; but I really must pursue it in order to  
“ satisfy myself fully on the question that seems  
“ to occupy us all. We can never judge so well as  
“ from our own experience. You will be aware, the  
“ moment I communicate my project to you, that  
“ I could only confide it to a very particular  
“ friend, and that he only can aid me in its  
“ execution. In a word the case is this :—I am  
“ most anxious to ascertain the impression pro-  
“ duced upon the body of a stout, courageous and  
“ well built man by the blows of the flat end of

“ a sabre, and how far his obstinacy will support him under that species of chastisement. “ Take your sabre then, my dear friend, and “ lay on, I entreat you, until I cry out, *I have enough.*”

Bursting into a fit of laughter, I endeavoured to dissuade him from his extravagant design and to convince him of the folly of his proposed experience, but it was quite impossible. He intreated, he insisted, upon my compliance with as much energy and earnestness as if I were about to confer upon him the most signal favor in the world.

At length I consented, determined to inflict due punishment upon his absurdity, and give him full measure. I applied myself to the task, when, to my great surprize, the patient, reflecting coolly after every blow, and summoning his utmost fortitude, uttered not a word and affected perfect indifference to the operation. In fact, I was obliged to give him some twenty severe blows, before he turned round and said: “Enough, “ my friend; I am satisfied, and am convinced “ that such an operation will prove an efficacious remedy for many faults.”

Concluding that all was over, I was going to ring for my valet to dress me, not a little amused at what had passed, when stopping my hand, the Vicomte, said: “ Not yet, we have not quite done, “ it will be proper that you should just try the “ experiment in your turn.”

I assured him that I had not the least incli-

nation, and that nothing could change my opinion, which was decidedly averse to such an innovation upon our national feelings.

“ True,” he replied, “ but it is not on your account, it is on my own, that I make this request, I know you well ; and though you are my best friend, you are inclined to be somewhat sarcastic and merry. You may perhaps amuse some of your fair listeners at my expense, and make a pleasant anecdote out of what has just passed.”

“ Cannot you take my word for it ?” replied I, “ Oh, certainly,” he said ; “ upon any serious subject ; but in such a case as this, even the fear of an indiscretion would be too much, so I intreat you, for the sake of our friendship, to make me quite easy upon this head, by allowing me to return what you have so politely bestowed upon me. Besides, I am sure, that you will find your account in it, you will have the satisfaction of judging by experience of the effect of this new method, so much disputed on all sides.”

Overpowered by his intreaties, I permitted him to take the fatal weapon ; but after receiving a single blow, instead of imitating his obstinacy, I cried out, “ Enough,” and assured him, that I had perfectly made up my mind upon this grave question. Thus ended this ludicrous adventure, we then took the most affectionate leave of each other, and though I was strongly tempted to relate the incident, I kept my promise of secrecy as long as he desired.

Yet, frivolous as he then was, this young man afterwards performed a task of rare and difficult execution. At the age when education is generally considered as completed, he had enjoyed few of its advantages: yet, inspired by a wish of acquiring reputation, he undertook to supply all his deficiencies. He abandoned pleasure, and devoted himself eagerly to study. Within four years he made himself master of mathematics, history, latin and several other languages, together with logic and rhetoric. He subsequently distinguished himself, both as a speaker and a warrior, and fell with honor in America, at the moment when he had boarded and taken an English vessel.

The summer was spent by our young men in military exercises, in perpetual discussions upon the new system of tactics, and in mock war and combats, while all were ardently bent upon a rupture with England, in order to exchange their fictitious battles for the field of honor, bringing their cold theories to a glorious proof, and compelling our pedants and minute disciplinarians to give place to truly able and military men.

As the war between England and America was one of liberty, it held out to us, that liberty in all the attractions of glory; and whilst men of more reflection, or of more philosophical views, looked upon this great quarrel only as a favorable opportunity for the adoption of their principles, for setting bounds to arbitrary power, and giving freedom to France, in bestowing upon the people, what they

called their invaluable rights ; we, more young and ardent, only enrolled ourselves under the banners of philosophy, in the hope of distinguishing ourselves in the field, and of reaping honors and preferments ; in short, it was in the character of heroes of chivalry that we displayed our philosophy.

But it happened, as a natural consequence, that after thus declaring ourselves, at first purely from a military spirit, the armed champions of liberty, we finally became sincerely attached to its principles. After having eagerly devoured all the works, and writings of every kind published in favor of the new doctrines, we avowed ourselves zealous disciples of their professors, and the adversaries of those who advocated the old times, whose prejudices, pedantry and worn out customs, then appeared to us ridiculous.

We were never weary indeed, of laughing at them with Voltaire, or of lamenting them with Rousseau ; the academical discourse of Thomas, of D'Alembert, and of their disciples heated our imagination ; we expressed our profound admiration of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, and if we supposed that we had discovered in this work the long lost rights of the people, it was not without sensations of shame, that we perused his *Persian Letters*, which expose the manners of our age, in those fine, spirited, and satiric touches that characterize that eloquent writer.

We were, moreover disgusted with listening to the censorious lessons which our seniors bestowed



upon us as if we were ignorant of all that their early or more mature life had seen, suffered, and even acted, amidst the scandalous scenes that marked the epoch of the regency, and during the long, feeble and licentious reign of Louis XV.

We were as little affected either with the sermons, or with the alarms of a clergy which, however distinguished by some shining qualities, had exhibited so many instances of prelatical ambition, so many intriguing abbés, and more especially a ministerial premier in the Cardinal Dubois, whose name and life reflected disgrace upon his order, upon the government, and upon the nation.

So many superstitious errors had been interwoven with the truths of religion; our daily writers unfolded such scenes of civil strife, inhuman massacres, and persecutions; so many princes deposed; persons burnt alive for sorcery; and nations groaning under the ignorance, prejudice and tyranny of the feudal system; the spoliation and expulsion of a million of Frenchmen on account of heresy, were events yet so recent; and the quarrels still subsisting between the Jansenistes and Molinistes, with those respecting the *billets de confession*, appeared so ridiculous, that it became impossible not to indulge the hope, however illusory, held out to us by men of genius, that a period was approaching, in which reason, humanity, toleration and freedom would rise above the ruin of popular errors and prejudices,

which had so long enslaved the world and deluged it with blood.

What tended still more to exasperate our impatience, was the contrast of our present situation with that of the English. Montesquieu had first opened our eyes to the advantages of British institutions; the intercourse between the two nations had become much more frequent; the brilliant but frivolous life led by our nobility at court, and in the capital was no longer sufficient to satisfy our self-love, when we reflected upon the dignity, the independence, the comparatively useful and important life of an English peer, or of a member of the House of Commons; as well as upon the liberty at once calm and lofty enjoyed by the entire body of the citizens of Great Britain.

It has always therefore been a subject of surprise to me, that our government and statesmen, instead of reproaching as frivolous and foreign to the national spirit, that rage for English fashions, which suddenly sprung up throughout France, did not perceive in it the desire of another species of imitation, and the germs of a mighty revolution in the public mind. They were not in the least aware that, while we were destroying in our pleasure grounds, the straight walks and alleys, the symmetrical squares, the trees cut in circles and the uniform hedges, in order to transform them into English gardens, we were indicating our wishes to resemble that

nation, in other and more essential points of nature and of reason.

They did not remark that the plain raiment, substituted instead of the ample and imposing dresses of the old court, betrayed an unanimous desire of equality, and that, being yet unable to shine like English Lords and Deputies in public assemblies, we were at least desirous of distinguishing ourselves by equal magnificence in our cirques, by the splendor of our parks, and by the swiftness of our horses.

Yet, nothing could have been more easy to devine than this simple truth: it was only necessary to converse with the importers of some of these fashions, with the Comte de Lauraguais, the Duc de Lauzun, the Duc de Chartres, the Marquis de Conflans, and many others, in order to learn that it was not to superficial imitations that they intended to confine their views.

However this may be, it is certain that all the young men at court, not excepting even the Princes of the blood, allowed themselves to be carried away by the torrent. The Queen evinced the most decided dislike of the constraints of our etiquette, and a decided fancy to English gardens, as well as to horse races, at the latter of which she frequently presided; thus encouraging the madness of gamblers, bent upon their own ruin.

A few of the old nobles, it is true, presumed to censure this mania; but only on the ground of its novelty. The good King (Louis XVI) alone

highly disapproved of it, not as a dangerous system of innovation, but as being a shameful and ridiculous luxury, exhibiting a humiliating preference for the customs of a foreign country over our own.

Whilst a spirit of gambling at these races, to an enormous extent pervaded all, the King, being warmly urged to bet, would never venture more than a single crown, but the example was useless. Opinion was already too strong to fear either authority or example. Unhappily, on all sides, the violence and agitation of the waves and the indecision of the pilot, were but too sensibly felt.

An anecdote is enough to convince us of this: the Count de Lauraguais, distinguished by his enthusiasm for English manners, customs and institutions, by the reports of his amatory adventures, by his somewhat cynical philosophy, and by an extravagance that consumed his fortune, had drawn upon himself by the boldness of his language and the audacious originality of his writings, several *lettres de cachet*, which he one day humorously entitled in my presence, his *Correspondence with the King*.

I recollect that, one day when I knew he had been banished to a distance from Paris, by virtue of one of these letters, I met him walking quietly on the race-course in the face of all the court: and when I wished to convince him of his imprudence, his answer was merely a laugh. Such a bravado could not possibly escape notice, yet it remained unpunished. Arbitrary power was

then rather tolerated than respected; and if instead of winking at such an act of insubordination, strong measures had been employed, I am not sure that the public feeling, urged into a state of effervescence, might not have given to this affair much greater importance and publicity than it really deserved.

The Count de Lauraguais, subsequently Duke de Brancas, and only just deceased at the age of ninety-one years, was certainly among the most singular personages of his time: uniting the most opposite qualities and defects, the least of which might have sufficed to bestow upon any individual a character of great originality.

Abandoning himself to the vortex of fashionable pleasures, even to excess, he, at the same time, devoted himself to science, and made several discoveries in chemistry, which obtained his admission into the Academy of Sciences. To him, we are indebted for the perfection of the manufacture of porcelain. He tried experiments upon ether, and upon its miscibility with water, and made some discoveries of less utility, relative to the decomposition of diamonds. These last proved beneficial to no one, and contributed to his ruin. Original and enthusiastic in all his pursuits, it would be difficult to estimate what sums he lavished in diamonds, a part of which were bestowed upon ungrateful beauties, while the rest were dissolved in his porcelain crucibles.

He was also one of the first to brave the pe-

dantry of the magistracy and the bigotry of the Sorbonne, by promoting the use of inoculation throughout France.

The celebrated grammarian Dumarsais, whose science reflected honor upon his country, was then languishing in poverty, because he was accused of being a Jansenist. M. de Lauraguais, by generously bestowing upon him a pension, made some compensation to this illustrious scholar for Romish persecutions, and for the injustice of the court.

Long distinguished as the most splendid, magnificent and gallant amongst our great nobles, he was seen, for a still longer period, in a mean dress, uncombed, and affecting all the simplicity of a peasant on the banks of the Danube.

I recollect him one day calling upon me in this cynical garb, but with a countenance radiant with pleasure. "What can possibly have given you this unusual satisfaction?" I enquired. "My friend, I am the happiest man in the world," was the answer, "I am completely ruined." "Upon my honor," said I, "you have been singularly happy—such happiness may tempt a man to hang himself." "You deceive yourself," he replied, "as long as I was only embarrassed, I found myself overwhelmed with business, persecuted, distracted between hope and fear; but now that I am ruined, I feel myself independent, easy, and freed from every source of inquietude and care."

At a period when the results of a refined civilization appeared in the rules of what was then termed *bon ton* and good company, and which exacted complete submission to one uniform standard, in taste, opinion, language and style of life, M. de Lauraguais, shaking off the yoke, ventured to follow his own inclinations, and boldly professed the hardest systems of every kind.

Our theatres owe to him an important revolution: he it was, who first made us sensible, how absurd, and how destructive of all scenic illusion it was, to permit the select party of the court and city, to be seated on the stage, on both sides of the theatre, in front of the scenes. By his advice also, the actors abandoned the custom of representing ancient characters in modern costume. Thanks to him, we no longer beheld Nero, Brutus, and Theseus in coats with long skirts, with scarfs and shoulder knots; and Phædra and Mérope, with their hair curled and powdered, and in hoop petticoats.

Smitten with the charms of Mademoiselle Arnoult, a young actress, and wearied with the assiduous attentions of a certain courtier, the Prince D....., by no means of a lively turn; the Count de Lauraguais applied very gravely to a physician, begging to be informed if it were possible for a person to die of ennui? "Such a result," replied the doctor, "would be considered extremely singular and very rare."—

“ But I ask,” continued the Count, “ if it be possible ?”—The physician then said, “ that certainly a long continued state of ennui, might induce disease such as a consumption, and thus cause the patient’s death.” Upon which this consultation, at the Count’s request, was regularly signed and the fee paid. He next proceeded to an advocate, and requested to be informed, whether he could prefer a legal complaint against another who had formed a design, by whatsoever means, to deprive him of his life. The advocate assured him there could not be the least doubt of it, and immediately consented to sign a declaration to that effect. Furnished with these two documents, the Count de Lauraguais, caused a criminal process to be instituted against Prince D . . . . ., who, he declared, had formed the design of killing him, as well as Mademoiselle Arnoult, with ennui. Though this whimsical affair had no result, it made no little noise, as will be easily imagined.

During the seven years’ war, M. de Lauraguais greatly distinguished himself, by the most calm and brilliant intrepidity. In a sanguinary battle he had thrice charged the enemy, at the head of his regiment, and when the contest was over, he assembled his officers and bestowed due praise upon each. He then enquired whether they approved of his conduct ? which was answered only by a general acclamation. “ I am very happy to find,” said the Count, “ that you are



“satisfied with your colonel; for my own part, I do not at all relish the sort of trade we are engaged in, I shall quit it.” And in fact he threw up his commission at the close of the campaign.

Upon this occasion he composed some verses, in which, besides drawing his own character, he launched a pretty sharp epigram against one of his contemporaries, the Duke de la Vallière, who possessed no kind of activity, but that of a courtier.

It was the same Count de Lauraguais who first exhibited to the eyes of the Parisians, a horse race, with English horses and English jockeys, in the plain des Sablons.

When ideas of liberty were promulgated, the Count de Lauraguais became one of the warmest partizans of the grand innovations which were preparing. He already beheld himself, in a French parliament, playing the part of a Walpole, a Chatham, and a Fox, but our revolutionary torrent swept away his hopes, like those of so many others, nor was it until after the restoration that he was enabled to take his seat in the Chamber of Peers, where his advanced age did not long permit him to appear.

The moment, however, that the city and the court, in spite of ancient customs, had abandoned themselves with a sort of fury to the discussion of public affairs, the signal for which had been given by the unprecedented publication of the finance report, rendered by M. Necker, a docu-

ment to be met with, not only in the hands of statesmen, but in the pockets of almost all our abbés, and on the toilettes of all our ladies, M. de Lauraguais, giving the first example of a bold opposition, wrote several pamphlets against the minister relative to the state of the finances, all displaying talent, and a satirical originality which drew down upon him fresh disgrace, and a few supplements to his *Correspondence with the King*.

If it be true that M. de Lauraguais permitted himself to indulge strange license in the way of paradox, irony and raillery, more especially in his writings, on the other hand, his company and conversation must be admitted to have been extremely lively and agreeable. He never failed to please, except when he spoke in a dogmatical tone on politics and finance, amidst a volatile audience, and trespassed upon their rules, which, in order to preserve the interest of the conversation, forbade any individual to dwell too tediously on any one topic ; for to please, at that period, it was requisite to conceal one's knowledge and to touch lightly upon every subject.

Occasionally M. de Lauraguais would be a poet, but he was not happy in a line that appears but too easy to many people, that requires long study and unremitting labor, without which nothing excellent can be produced, yet which must be so artfully concealed as to betray no traces of its existence.

One morning the Count entered my room in

order to read to me a tragedy he had written entitled "Jocaste." As he afterwards insisted upon my giving an opinion, I amused myself with replying in jest, a thing much to his taste, that the piece certainly contained some beauties, but that, unluckily, the verses of the sphinx were all that I had clearly comprehended in it. "That," replied he, "is because you have not properly listened to them."—"I will convince you of the contrary," answered I; "for there are some which I recollect," and I instantly repeated to him the part I alluded to.

"You are a poor jester," replied the Count, "your wit cannot reach high enough to measure my talent nor that of the age; since you fail to perceive that, in this work, I render to Europe the account of my genius."—"I would have you beware," I retorted, "of the word *account* it is a bad omen."

In reality, M. de Lauraguais, whose bitterness of sarcasm, when he wrote, appeared the work of a malignant spirit, was one of the best hearted men in the world. Obliging, friendly, prodigal of every thing he had, and content to dispense with every thing he did not possess; no one better than he, knew how to squander a fortune and support poverty with perfect philosophy.

One of his mistresses declared that he used to lodge her in his green-house, almost starving her to death, and allowing her scarcely any thing to eat except foreign fruits. When she reproached him

with it, he replied : “ Can you complain, ungrateful girl, of wanting enough to eat—a trivial matter at best—while you are thus abundantly supplied with superfluities that every body longs for?”

For some time he made high pretensions to metaphysics, and had one day an interview with the Chevalier de Boufflers and myself, for the express purpose of explaining to us the obscure doctrine contained in a work entitled, “ *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité*,” a book written by the celebrated Saint Martin, head of the sect of the *Illuminés*.

After having patiently listened to a dissertation of two hours on this subject, Boufflers and myself both agreed in assuring him, that we had hitherto imagined we sometimes caught the meaning of some passages in that enigmatical work; but that, since we had been favored with his learned commentary, we comprehended nothing at all. He only joined us in laughing at his own presumption, at ours, and at the time that we had all lost.

Such, indeed, was the eccentricity of that age, that, at the very moment when incredulity was in fashion, and all the ties of society were regarded as so many chains; when philosophy treated all ancient religions and all old customs as so many prejudices, a large portion of these young and new sages were inflamed, some with a rage for the *Illuminés*, or for the doctrines of Swedenborg, and Saint Martin, respecting the possible communication between men and celestial spirits; while

many others, ranging themselves round the apparatus of Mesmer, confided in the universal efficacy of magnetism, were persuaded of the infallibility of the oracles of sonambulism, and never, for a moment, suspected the connection subsisting between this magical apparatus, of which they were become so enamoured, and the miraculous tomb of *Páris*, which they had so often turned into ridicule.

At no period did there appear a stronger contrast in matters of opinion, taste, and manners: the maxims of philanthropy, declamations against vain glory, and prayers for perpetual peace, were applauded in the academies; but the same voices, after forsaking these quiet precincts, joined in all the declamation employed to urge the government into a war, and became as violent and intriguing as the rest. Each was ambitious of eclipsing his acquaintance by the display of luxury, at the same time that he was advocating the cause of republicanism, and preaching up the doctrine of equality. At no time did the court display more magnificence and vanity, and less real power. We began to despise the power of Versailles, and paid our court to that of the *Encyclopedie*.

A word in praise of D'Alembert and Diderot, was better received than the most signal mark of favor bestowed by a prince. Gallantry, ambition, and philosophy, were all intermixed and confounded together. Prelates left their dioceses to intrigue for places, while our Abbés composed verses and amatory tales.

The republican doctrines of Brutus began to be applauded at court ; even monarchs appeared about to embrace the cause of a rebellious people against their King ; until, at length, independence became the theme of camps, democracy was discussed at noblemen's tables, philosophy at balls, and morality in our boudoirs. What may most reasonably be regretted, perhaps, belonging to an epoch like this, that will never occur again, was the avowed toleration of all opinions in the midst of conflicting systems, tastes, and wishes, and a moderation in the feelings of society, which formed its great charm.

The terrific struggles between ancient and modern doctrines were, as yet, confined to argument, and were treated in the light of theories. The period had not arrived in which their application was destined to excite hatred and discord in our breasts ; too happy days when our opinions exercised no influence over our feelings, and when we had sense enough still to retain our affection for those who thought differently from ourselves !

I shall never cease to dwell upon those frequent and delightful parties, where financiers, magistrates, courtiers, poets, with the most agreeable and celebrated sages, mingled together ; nor upon those conversations *au mont Parnasse* at the house of Count de Choiseul-Gouffier, in which alternately shone Boufflers, Delille, Rulhiere, Saint-Lambert, Champfort, La Harpe, Marmon- tel, Panchaud, Raynal, the Abbé de Périgord, since Prince de Talleyrand, my brother, one of

the most pleasing men of his time, the Prince de Ligne, the new Chevalier de Grammont of every country, the favorite of every monarch, the courtier of all courts, intimate with all philosophers, and the Duke de Lauzun, who, every where in search of glory, was rewarded only with its illusions, and whose adventures, for the most part, were more imaginary than real.

At some other places of general resort we listened, with mingled pleasure and respect, to the simple and laborious, the eloquent and profound Abbé Barthelemy ; to Malesherbes, one of the most popular of our celebrated characters, the most just minister, incorruptible magistrate and least flattering courtier ; that immortal Malesherbes, a philosopher in reasoning, in action wise and prudent, who delighted us with the treasures of his memory and the variety of his anecdotes, as much as he improved us by his moral discourses and the extent of his acquirements ; and to the Duc de Nivernais, as distinguished for his delicacy of taste and urbanity of manners, as for his penetration and agreeable talents. This nobleman knew how to unite the dignity of the old court to the philosophical tone of the new, combining, in his own person, the form and spirit of two different ages.

At the mansion of the Princess de Beauvan, the model of amenity, and of art in sustaining and varying the conversation, we beheld an assemblage, the picture of all that was most delicate and best in the court of Louis XV, unaccompanied by

any thing that could call forth the censures with which a just severity visited the licentious character of that period.

Traces of a former epoch might also be observed at the parties of la Maréchale de Luxembourg, where recollections of the period [of the regency still prevailed; but time, repentance, and the desire of reputation, were fast effacing them, leaving us little more than the importance and dignity attached to the names which recalled to mind the reign of Louis XIV.

I eagerly renounced the companions of my early days, and the amusements suited to my age, in order to listen to the conversation of societies at once better calculated to form my reason, my understanding and my taste.

Destined, both from my position in society, and my inclination for historical and political studies, to assume a public station, I felt how important it was for me to become connected with all those eminent men, who, without flattery, might be considered as the flower of human society.

It was, indeed, at the hôtel de la Rochefoucauld, at the mansions of D'Alembert, and of Madame Geoffrin, that the most distinguished literary and philosophical characters assembled. There that spirit of liberty was to be found which, while it enlightened the world, was destined to change its aspect, and, unhappily, also, to shake the old foundations of society, in seeking to substitute new.

In the assemblies held at la Maréchale de



Luxembourg's, de la Valliere's, and at the hotel de Choiseul, were to be seen all the most remarkable characters, whose accomplished manners, whose rank, or whose gallantry had been conspicuous in the reign of Louis XV. At the house of Madame du Deffiant there was always a number of distinguished foreigners, attracted by the curiosity of knowing more of the ancient and modern character of a nation, which in their own countries, they, in their dulness, slandered and accused of frivolity, a nation, nevertheless, that has been, at all times, is, and will continue to be, the object of their jealousy.

Although very young, I was naturally inclined to reflection ; and I soon became aware, by frequenting these brilliant schools of civilization, of the real causes which gave our political and literary characters such manifest and invariable advantages over those of the rest of Europe, excepting, indeed, England, who may dispute this point of pre-eminence with us.

These causes are the same as those which confer upon the historians of antiquity an evident advantage over the chief part of our modern historians. The truth is, that, in order to treat with men, and to describe them well, it is essential to study and to know them ; and this knowledge can only be acquired in the midst of a highly civilized state of society, and in a situation where long acquaintance with the world has substituted realities in the place of appearances, and experience in the place of systems. Why, for instance,

do we find the chief part of the historians of modern Europe so cold in their narrations? Though possessing erudition, and often not deficient in talent, they are, nevertheless, dry and devoid of all dramatic interest, while their prolix reflections present us with nothing beyond common place morality, the often repeated dogmas of the pulpit or of the college.

The interest, on the other hand, with which we study the works of Xenophon, Livy, Polibius, Sallust and Tacitus, which bid defiance to time, and which are reperused with fresh avidity, appears to be founded on the fact that they were always actors in the scenes they described, or in such as nearly resembled them.

They were no abbés, no professors, no scholars, isolated from the world by virtue of their vows, by their studies, or by their obscurity, who threw such vivid lights upon the play of human passions; they were more men who had felt and combated them. These illustrious writers united the threefold merit of men of letters, men of the world and statesmen, thus possessing a triple advantage, a pure literary style, the delicacy of taste derived from high society, and the ability of practical politicians.

In modern Europe we may accordingly remark, that the men whose political or historical writings have excited the most constant degree of interest, are such names as the President de Thou, the Duke de Sully, and the Cardinal de Retz.

Had Montesquieu been nothing more than a mere learned professor, his genius would have presented us only with cold dissertations upon the laws. But he gave us the *spirit* of them, because he knew the world and its affairs, men of all classes, and society in all its gradations and shades.

What is it that constitutes the charm of memoirs, written even with the most negligence, but the appearance of the authors themselves rather as actors than as narrators of the scenes described? But, however natural they may be, these productions are too frequently deficient in art, as well as impartiality. They exhibit only a corner of the picture, destitute of ornament, whilst, in fact, of all kinds of eloquence, history and politics, are those which most essentially require a combination of elegance, simplicity and variety, united to depth of thought, knowledge of mankind, and a familiarity with affairs.

In England, the national institutions have been more favorable to the growth of this species of talent than those of other governments. Public affairs are there really public, they belong to all; and every one knows them and takes an interest in them. The theory is not kept distinct from the practice; cemented by liberty, the social bonds it has there established embrace all classes and all ranks; insomuch, that a solid reputation is attached to the names of

the writers, statesmen and orators of that country, such as Hume, Clarendon, Littleton, Robertson, Chesterfield, and others.

When we, like them, have released ourselves from the thralldom in which we have been held by the feudal power, by arbitrary authority, by scholastic prejudices, by superstition, by the compulsory exclusion of almost all classes of society from the conduct of public affairs, and by the long established and ridiculous contempt for literature professed by our privileged classes, then will the pursuit of history and politics assume that elevated rank amongst us, which is justly their due.

It is a most singular and remarkable circumstance, that, at the court, as well as in the city, amongst the nobles and the military, as well as amongst the citizens and the financiers, in the very heart of a vast monarchy, the ancient sanctuary of privileges reserved to the nobility, the parliaments and the priesthood, and, notwithstanding our habits of long obedience to arbitrary power, the cause of the insurgent Americans should thus have attracted undivided attention, and excited universal interest.

On all sides public opinion urged a regal government to declare itself in favor of republican liberty, and even murmured at its irresolution and delay. The ministers, gradually yielding to the torrent, were, at the same time, alarmed at the prospect of a ruinous war, in case

of a rupture with England, and were, moreover, restrained by the rigid probity of Louis XVI, the most moral character of his time.

That monarch considered neutrality as a duty, inasmuch as no instance of aggression had occurred on the side of the English, to justify, in his eyes, a hostile measure against the crown of Great Britain. It was no apprehension of expenditure, or even the chances of war, that deterred him, but his conscience led him to regard a violation of the treaties of peace as actual perfidy, when undertaken with the sole motive of humbling a powerful adversary.

Accordingly, the government, wavering between the will of the Prince and the general opinion, was compelled, by its weakness, to commit one of the greatest political errors; it secretly encouraged the people to assist the Americans, through commercial channels, with arms and ammunition; it gave a favorable, though mysterious reception to the American envoys; soothed with flattering hopes the warlike spirit of our young soldiers, and permitted the circulation of tracts favorable to American liberty; while, at the same time, it charged our ambassador at London to calm the alarms of the English ministry with renewed assurances, that peace would be preserved by the observation of the strictest neutrality.

By persisting in this insincere conduct, our government sacrificed alike the advantages of a pacific system, and of an avowed hostility, ex-

posing itself to all the inconveniences of both measures, because it ventured to decide upon neither.

In the meanwhile the storm increased: the Americans had hitherto experienced reverses, but fortune was, at length, beginning to declare in their favor. Enthusiasm for liberty and the love of their native land, finally triumphed over every difficulty. The tactics and discipline of an English army no longer surprised the irregular courage of the new republicans. The Congress, strongly resembling the ancient senate of Rome, deliberated with coolness, and enacted wholesome laws in the midst of the tumult of arms.

It was in vain that an Elector of the German empire supplied the English army with auxiliaries, and entered into a disgraceful treaty, by which he established an exact tarif, specifying the several sums to be paid in cases of death, mutilation or wounds, either slight or severe, that might be suffered by or inflicted upon his subjects whom he sold.

The American armies daily made a rapid progress; and, at length, we heard, that a whole English army, commanded by General Burgoyne, had been surrounded by the rebel militia, deprived of all communication, all provisions, and, that, unable either to fight or to retreat, it had been compelled to lay down its arms at Saratoga, at the feet of a poor but haughty race of agriculturists, as inexperienced as they were valiant,

and whose simplicity, want of discipline, wretched appointments, and ignorance of military affairs, it had so long affected to despise.

This victory gave an inclination to the political balance ; and its fame was quickly circulated throughout Europe. Good fortune is every where sure of attracting friends, and America, in a short time, boasted of her allies.

Tidings of this success, of course, redoubled our ardor and impatience. Our ministers, warmly pressed and somewhat encouraged by fortune, took less pains to conceal their object, and persuaded the King that it was practicable to consult the interest of France by forming a commercial treaty with the Americans, without breaking with the court of England.

Our ministers, in consequence, received the American commissioners more openly, entered into negotiations with them, and, in December, 1777, both parties signed the preliminary articles of a treaty of amity and commerce.

The result of this measure had not been anticipated by them, although it was one that ensued as a necessary consequence. The English ministry broke out into the most violent complaints against us, considering our new treaty with their rebellious colonists as an open declaration of war.

It was in vain that our ambassador alleged the necessity of consulting our commercial interest, and protested our earnest desire for peace. The English were resolved to go to war ; and, at

the same time, conceiving themselves authorized by our conduct, which they regarded as an aggression, to break through the law of nations, had dispatched secret orders to their admirals. Thus, we soon received intelligence, without any declaration of war on their part, or any act of hostility on ours, that they had seized upon several of our merchant vessels, and had commenced their attacks upon our possessions in India.

The definitive treaty with America was speedily ratified ; our ambassador left London ; both nations appealed to arms ; and the wishes of our warlike youth were gratified, as war immediately burst forth in the two hemispheres.

This event put an end to all designs of making individual efforts, and sailing as volunteers to America ; the war called each of us to his proper standard, and promised us approaching occasions of reaping honors, while we fought in the service of our country.

As we were too eager, however, to await the opportunities thus offered, and, as the war against England promised to be almost exclusively maritime, it was easy to foresee that there would be few expeditions to employ our troops by land, and, that these would consist of very limited numbers. I renewed, therefore, my applications to be permitted to join La Fayette in the camp of Washington.

The representations he made in his letters to me, respecting the manners, the enthusiasm, and



the heroic constancy and courage of the Americans, all tended to increase my desire of serving their cause.

I intreated the Queen to support my application, explaining to her that, as I was a colonel of dragoons, and, as most probably very few cavalry would be employed during the war, I might absent myself from my regiment without detriment to the public service.

As every species of elevated sentiment had attractions for this Princess, she approved my conduct; but, a few days afterwards, she informed me that, should my request be granted, it was feared my example would give rise to fresh applications of the kind, which might prove very inconvenient, and that the King objected to the absence of commanding officers.

I had not the smallest hope of being assisted by my father; a strong advocate for methodical proceedings and strict discipline, he would certainly have been more active in opposing than in forwarding my views. I was compelled, therefore, to await a more favorable turn of fortune; but, in this affair, she did not prove propitious to me.

In the mean while, from a variety of menacing symptoms, we were prepared to expect a general war throughout Europe, whose ravages threatened to involve the whole civilized world. The ambitious views of the Empress Catherine, and her refusal to restore the Crimea, had armed the Turks against her. The Elector Palatine was just de-

ceased; and his testament, together with the pretensions of Austria to his dominions, excited disputes between the courts of Vienna and Berlin, which were speedily followed by a rupture.

Spain, it is true, still sought to effect a reconciliation between us and the English, but all such attempts proved abortive. It was, already, not difficult to foresee that that country would soon be induced to make common cause with us, in order to wrest the dominion of the seas from our ancient rival.

Even Holland, at length, notwithstanding the Statholder's predilection for England, attempted to revive some degree of her former spirit in favor of liberty, and a numerous party there evinced a determination to urge the government to declare for the cause of America.

In this juncture of affairs, so alarming to the friends of humanity and peace, our young men, eager for war, found wherewith to flatter their wishes and nourish their boldest hopes.

The result, however, was precisely opposite to what we had expected; the ocean, America and the Indies, became the sole theatre of actual and vigorous warfare. The flame which threatened to break out over the whole continent of Europe, was suddenly extinguished. The Turks became resigned to their fate. Prussia and Austria made only a single campaign, without any result. The pacific mediation of France, united to the armed mediation of Russia, appeased the differences that had arisen between the cabinets

of Vienna and Berlin, and they terminated in a speedy peace, which was ratified at Teschen.

Thus, before the expiration of a year, England beheld herself standing alone, with the exception of the feeble alliance of Portugal, in arms against the Americans, the French, the Spaniards and the Dutch.

In this manner the greater part of our visions of glory vanished. It was only our seamen, some dozen of generals, and, perhaps, twenty of our regiments that obtained the envied distinction of active service upon the American continent in the Antilles,\* and in Asia in the East Indies.

The sole hope, then, that remained for us, was a descent upon England, a vast undertaking, whose execution we loudly solicited, but one which the circumspection of our ministers long hesitated to adopt, and prosecuted with all that delay and indecision which renders success impossible.

Our naval equipments were numerous; our seamen possessed equal information and intrepidity; our land forces were animated with the best spirit, and further inflamed with that love of glory which promises the proudest exploits.

The ability of M. Necker had supplied the treasury with ample means to carry on great enterprises. France, at length, had found an opportunity of overthrowing the power of her eter-

\* The name given by the French to a portion of the West Indian islands.

nal rival. To attain this object our forces were fully adequate ; our ministers were not destitute of talent, but they had no genius.

Owing, nevertheless, to the force of circumstances, to the perseverance of the Americans, and to the bravery of our troops, as well as to several fortunate combinations of the new ministry which directed our last operations, the result of the war was as glorious for us, as disastrous for the English, who lost thirteen fine provinces in another hemisphere.

Our treaty with America embraced some offensive stipulations, to be put in execution only in case of a rupture with England. The integrity of our monarch induced him, against the advice of his ministers, to avoid being the first to pronounce the terrible word "*war*." He did not think himself authorized, by the frequent examples set by the English, to infringe upon the laws of nations with impunity ; and, so far from taking advantage of the moment in which Great Britain found herself unprepared for the defence of her coasts and the protection of her extensive commerce, he delayed until she should commit the first acts of hostility ; thus believing himself less responsible for all the calamities which such a war was sure to bring in its train.

And, in fact, it was the English who first openly broke the existing peace. One of their men of war, named the *Arethusa*, attacked the *Belle-Poule*, a French frigate, whose commander, M. de la Clocheterie, very brilliantly sus-

tained the honor of the French flag. The engagement was long, obstinate and sanguinary. The *Arethusa*, being worsted, steered away, while the French captain brought into port his frigate, completely riddled with bullets, and a crew reduced to one half of its number by the enemy's fire. He was received in triumph by an immense crowd, who hailed with transport this first instance of brilliant success, regarding it as a sure presage of future glory and good fortune.

Louis XVI then no longer hesitated to employ all the forces which his ministers had prepared. Count d'Estaing, commanding a French squadron, directed his course towards the coast of America. His appearance in those quarters served to intimidate General Clinton, at that time employed in investing the city of Philadelphia. The English general retired towards New-York, while the Americans, resuming the offensive, followed the enemy in his retreat, and brought him to an action at Monmouth, in which they had the advantage, though without obtaining any decisive result.

A French plenipotentiary, M. Gerard de Rayneval, who had sailed in the fleet of Count d'Estaing, repaired to the American Congress, with powers to acknowledge its independence, and to enter into stipulations of an alliance, offensive and defensive. The generals Washington, La Fayette and Sullivan, had together concerted an

able plan, the object of which was the conquest of Rhede-Island.

It was towards this point that our admiral now set sail ; but, instead of disembarking his troops according to the entreaties of the Americans, his desire of engaging, and hope of destroying the English squadron, then approaching, induced him to relinquish every other object. He advanced, therefore, to meet the enemy's fleet.

The engagement had already commenced, when a terrific hurricane separated the two fleets. The violence of the storm dispersed all their vessels, a great number of which were considerably damaged. Two of ours were wholly unrigged and dismasted, and, by a singular fatality, were on the point of being taken by vessels of inferior force, when the Count d'Estaing arrived in time for their rescue. The English squadron, on its side, received reinforcements, and the execution of the plan having thus miscarried, the Count d'Estaing formed other designs, and steered another course in order, by some brilliant affair, to atone for the want of success attending his first expedition.

There arose out of this disaster, or this fault, some causes of misunderstanding between the French and American leaders. Washington contrived, nevertheless, to draw this advantage from it ; he convinced the soldiers under his command, that it was principally to their own courage, fortitude and vigor, that they were to look

for success; and, that, too much confidence should not be reposed in the assistance, however useful, but still precarious, of distant allies, that, in short, they must put themselves in a situation to vanquish the enemy *without assistance*, in order to be sure of receiving it.

In the Indies, our want of vigor, and the timid precautions of the French government, produced very serious evils: a naval force, if earlier sent on those stations, would have changed the aspect of affairs, and given a fatal blow to the English ascendancy in that quarter; but want of foresight had prevented our ministers from making there, the necessary preparations, either for defence or attack.

In one quarter, we had secretly supplied the famous Hyder-Ally, an Indian prince, who attempted to shake off the English yoke, with the aid of our officers and our advice. When we thus encouraged an enemy so formidable to the English, we ought to have calculated upon their retaliating upon our colonies and our commerce.

We soon began to suffer for our negligence. The English attacked Pondicherry and Chandernagore, and these rich factories were speedily lost to us, without any other equivalent than the lustre with which the heroic courage and the skill of our admiral, the Count de Suffren, three years subsequently, covered our arms.

During the period that these important events, the forerunners of fresh storms, engaged the at-

tention of all cabinets and of all classes of people, from the highest personages of the court to the most babbling loungers upon the terrace of the Tuileries, the promenade of the Palais-Royal and the coffee houses of Paris, a new spectacle appeared to attract and to fix the attention of the Parisians.

Voltaire, the prince of poets, the patriarch of philosophers, the glory of his age and country, had, for many years past, remained an exile from France. While all Frenchmen perused his works with delight, scarcely any of them had yet beheld him : his contemporaries were to him, if we may venture to express it, a sort of posterity. Not a few carried their admiration of his universal genius to a degree of adoration ; his productions were the ornament of the libraries, his name was familiar to all minds, but his features were concealed from all regards. His spirit seemed to govern, to direct and to modify all the characters of his age ; but, if we except a small number who had been admitted into his philosophical sanctuary at Ferney, he reigned over the rest of his fellow citizens like some invisible power.

Perhaps no single writer ever produced such important changes as Voltaire, in the opinions and manners of his times. No head of a party ever combated and vanquished at the same time, without appearing to mix in the controversy, a greater number of enemies, till then supposed invincible, of errors long consecrated by time



time and prejudices deeply rooted by ancient customs.

Destitute, nevertheless, of rank, birth, or authority, his power consisted only in the clearness of his reasoning, in the varied eloquence of his style, and in the captivating grace of his manner. In fact, in order to level with the earth, the ancient and formidable colossus against which his efforts were directed, he, for the most part employed, not the heavy club, but the light arms of ridicule and irony. It is certain that none ever made a more dexterous use of them than he did, or inflicted with them more deep and incurable wounds.

Availing themselves of some inexcusable imprudences, of some compositions militating against good morals, of some spots, in short, that slightly tarnished the disk of this brilliant literary luminary, our clergy, together with a few of our old parliamentary censors, ancient courtiers, and the partizans of old abuses, united for the purpose of obtaining, not an actual condemnation, not even an official order for his banishment, but intimations sufficiently explicit to compel him to consult his peace and security in exile.

His return, like his disgrace, was a proof of the weakness of the reigning authority. At that period philosophical opinions had gained such an ascendancy over men's minds, and so far intimidated the power of government, that he was

allowed to return without any express permission. The court refused to receive him, but the whole city hastened to welcome his return. He was refused even the slightest favor, while, at the same time, he was allowed to enjoy a triumph of the most brilliant description.

The Queen, carried away by the torrent, made ineffectual attempts to obtain the King's consent, to receive at her parties this distinguished character, the object of universal admiration. Louis XVI actuated by scruples of conscience, did not think himself justified in permitting the approach of a writer whose daring attacks, not confined only to abuses, had frequently aimed at subverting long established opinions and doctrines considered sacred. The precincts of the throne, therefore, continued closed against a man, to whom the nation, in the excess of its admiration, offered a sort of worship.

This great man's return threw his rivals into consternation; the clergy was indignant, but as well as the parliament remained silent, and the philosophical ascendancy acquired fresh strength from the presence and from the triumph of its leading chief.

At this epoch it was necessary to have witnessed the public exultation, the eager curiosity and enthusiasm of admiring crowds desirous of hearing and beholding this celebrated old man, contemporary with two ages, who had inherited the fame of the one, and formed the

glory of the other ; it required, I repeat, to be a living witness of this spectacle to form a just idea of it.

It was the apotheosis of a demi-god, still living ; when he addressed the people, he said with as much feeling as reason : “ Do you wish to kill me with pleasure ? ” And, in fact, the delight he felt at such numerous and affecting marks of their regard, was too much for his strength ; he sank under his emotions, and the altar, which they were decorating to his honor, speedily became his tomb.

Equally desirous of obtaining a nearer view of this illustrious man and more fortunate than the rest, I, without having to force my way through the crowds that sought to approach him, enjoyed the satisfaction of contemplating him at leisure, several times at the house of my parents, with whom he had been rather intimately acquainted during the earlier part of his life.

My mother, at that time, had been suffering during two years, under a cruel disorder, which, amidst the severest anguish, was fast preying upon her strength and life. She was no longer able to rise from her bed. Her extreme weakness may be estimated by the fact that, within a month of the period here mentioned, she breathed her last.

She had invariably been esteemed one of the most distinguished women of Paris, for penetration, for the soundness of her mind and taste, for the clearness of her understanding, and for the elegance of her language and manners.

She was remarkable, when young, for her personal attractions, and was considered a model of the highest fashion, and the most pleasing urbanity.

Voltaire had not forgotten her, he instantly intreated that he might see her, and although she had hardly sufficient strength left to behold, to hear, and to answer him, she did not hesitate to receive him.

It often happens in respect to persons, places and objects, that we have never seen, and of which we have formed only a distant conception, that we find them quite different from what we had expected. I had experienced this repeatedly, but when I saw Voltaire, he appeared to me exactly as my fancy had represented him.

His leanness bore witness to his long incessant labors, his ancient and peculiar dress reminded me of the last remaining witness of the age of Louis XIV; the historian of that age, and the immortal painter of Henry IV. His piercing eye sparkled with genius and sarcasm, in it might be traced the fire of the tragic poet, the author of *Œdipus* and of *Mahomet*, the profound thinker, the ingenious and satiric novelist, the severe and penetrating observer of human nature, while his thin and bending form seemed nothing more than a slight envelope, almost transparent through which beamed his genius and his soul.

I was transported with pleasure and admiration, I felt like one suddenly permitted to be borne back into distant times,—who might behold Homer, Plato, Virgil, or Cicero face to face. Per-

haps we can, with difficulty, comprehend, at this period, the nature of such an impression ; we have been witness to so many events,—to such a succession of men and things, that we are rendered almost indifferent to every thing ; and to conceive what I then felt, it would be necessary to breathe the atmosphere in which I lived :—it was that of exaltation in a high degree.

We had not then partaken of those bitter fruits of a season of long, tempestuous, and discordant politics ;—envy, selfishness, want of repose, indifference produced by lassitude, and the depression that follows the wretched moment of awakening from illusions that have been destroyed. We were dazzled with the light of novel doctrines and ideas, we were radiant with hope, and filled with ardour for every species of glory, with enthusiasm for all kind of talent, and enchanted with the seducing dreams of a philosophy that aimed at securing the happiness of the human race, by dispelling with its strong light the long and mournful darkness which, during so many ages, had held it bound in the chains of superstition and despotism. So far from predicting misfortunes, excesses, crimes, and the overthrow of thrones and of principles, we only looked forward to the future for all those blessings that must accrue to humanity under the government of reason.

From such dispositions, judge what must have been the impression made upon our minds, by the appearance, amongst us, of the celebrated man

whom all the first authors, and most distinguished philosophers of our time regarded as their great model and their master.

I was all ears and eyes when I approached Voltaire, and my whole attention was alive only to him, as if I expected every moment some oracle to escape his lips. Yet it was neither the time nor the place to pronounce them, if he had even been Apollo himself; for he was standing by the bed-side of a dying mortal—a sight calculated to inspire only with mournful reflections. She appeared no longer susceptible of admiration—not even of consolation. Nevertheless, she made one great effort to vanquish nature; her eyes recovered some portion of their lustre, and her voice of its power.

Voltaire delicately sought to withdraw her attention from the present scene, by recurring to the past; he inquired very briefly concerning her health, only observing to her, that, having himself been very frequently a sufferer, and as much exhausted as she appeared to be, he had nevertheless, by exerting the same courage which she now shewed, surmounted his complaint and been restored to health. “Physicians,” said he, “perform few “ miracles, but nature often does wonders, more “ especially in favor of those to whom she has “ given the vital principle which still glows in “ your looks.”

He then proceeded to remind her of a variety of anecdotes relating to the society in which they had formerly moved, and this he did with so

much vivacity, freshness of memory, and abundance of sallies and allusions, that we should assuredly have forgotten his age, had not his voice and features still reminded us of his having reached his eightieth year.

Though he could not restore to health the patient who listened to him, he, at least, reanimated her. For a little while, she appeared no longer sensible of her weakness and sufferings,—she maintained the conversation with a degree of liveliness calculated to deceive even me, and to flatter me with some faint hopes of her recovery.

A few days afterwards, Voltaire again came to see her. Happening that day to find herself a little stronger than usual, she took a more active part in the conversation ; in the course of which she gently but forcibly reproached the old philosopher for the obstinacy with which he continued in all his writings to attack and satirize the church, together with all its members, not sparing religion itself, under the pretext of combating established errors, absurd superstitions, and dangerous fanatics. “ Be generous and moderate, then,” she continued, “ after your victory. “ What have you at present to fear from such “ adversaries? Our fanatics are no more ; they “ can do no further injury ; their reign is “ past.”

“ No, you deceive yourself,” replied Voltaire with warmth ; “ the fire is smothered, but not “ extinguished. These fanatics, these hypocrites,

“ are like enraged dogs ; we have muzzled them,  
“ but they have not lost their teeth ; it is true,  
“ they no longer bite ; but if we do not extract  
“ their teeth, you will see, the moment they  
“ find an opportunity, whether they will not  
“ bite.”

As he said this his eyes flashed with anger, and his passion, for the moment, made him forget that propriety of expression, equally prescribed by reason and good taste, of which he had habitually shewn himself so inimitable a model.

The same curiosity to behold this extraordinary man had attracted fifty or sixty persons, who filled the saloon at my mother's house. They ranged themselves in ranks near her couch, stretching forward, and raising themselves upon tiptoe, without making the least noise, anxious to catch the least accent that fell from Voltaire's lips, and to mark the slightest variation of his countenance. It was there that I had an opportunity of observing how closely prepossession and enthusiasm, even among the most enlightened class, border upon ridicule and superstition. My mother, being asked by Voltaire more particularly respecting her health, told him, that the most painful feeling she had, arose from the decay of her stomach, and the difficulty of finding any kind of aliment that it could bear.

Voltaire sympathized with her, and by way of consolation assured her that he was once for nearly a year in the same state, and believed to be incurable ; but that, nevertheless, a very sim-



ple remedy had restored him. It consisted in taking no other nourishment than yolks of eggs beaten up with the flour of potatoes and water.

Ingenious sallies and brilliant observations were clearly out of the question in such a conversation as this, yet he had hardly pronounced the last words—*yolks of eggs and the flour of potatoes*, when one of my neighbours, well known indeed for his extreme tendency to infatuation and his mediocrity of understanding, fixed his eye upon me sparkling with pleasure, and exclaimed with admiration as he pressed my arm ;—What a man ! what a man ! *not a word without a trait !*

The reader will smile at such an absurdity which is almost beyond probability ; but to be convinced that it is not a solitary instance, let him remark, in all times and in all countries, how eagerly the crowd press forward, not only round the seat of a man of genius, or the throne of a great monarch, but the pulpit of a ranting preacher, and the toys of a young prince scarcely out of the cradle ; and he will find that amidst all the servile homage dictated by flattery, there is a great deal, and that not the least absurd, which is perfectly sincere, springing from a species of idolatry, which every kind of elevation is so apt to impress upon the crowd ; for it is not always out of fear, but out of folly, that so many demigods, as well actual as figurative, have been made.

Until then, I had modestly kept myself, as I ought, in the last rank of those who were con-

templating Voltaire ; but at the close of his second visit, as he was passing out of my mother's chamber into another apartment, I was introduced to him. Several of his friends, and, among others, the Count d'Argental, the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Duke de Nivernais, the Count de Guibers, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Marmontel, D'Alembert, who had doubtless formed too favorable an idea of me, had already spoken of me to him with much commendation.

I was certainly indebted for it to their kindness, being known only at that period by a few trifling productions, such as tales, fables and songs, the success of which depends upon the caprice of fashion, and has frequently about as long a duration.

In truth, I had only rendered myself deserving of their regard by my eagerness to form my taste and understanding by their conversation, and by assiduously seeking to enlighten my ideas by a communication with theirs, in so much, that it was in me rather the zeal of a disciple than the rising talent of an author, that they found occasion to commend.

However, this may be, Voltaire flattered my self-love by the delicacy with which he alluded to my taste for letters, and to my first essays ; he encouraged me too, by giving me his advice. " Do not forget," he said, " that you have deserved the praise bestowed upon you, by carefully combining, in your most trifling poetical effusions, some realities with your images,

“ a portion of morality with your sentiments, and  
“ with your liveliness, a few grains of philoso-  
“ phy. At the same time, distrust your incli-  
“ nation for poetry, you may venture to follow  
“ it, but do not suffer yourself to be carried  
“ away by it. From all I have heard, and  
“ from the position you occupy, you are destined  
“ for more serious pursuits. You have done well,  
“ however, to commence your career by writing  
“ verse; for it is extremely difficult for those who  
“ have never been sensible of its charms, who  
“ are both ignorant of its art and its beauty, ever  
“ to become excellent prose writers. Go, young  
“ man; accept the good wishes of an aged friend  
“ who predicts for you a happy fate; but, fail  
“ not to recollect that poetry, all divine as she  
“ is supposed, is at best a siren.”

I thanked him for his literary benediction, observing that it was with the liveliest pleasure, I recalled to mind, on this occasion, that formerly the names of a great poet and a prophet, (*vates*) were synonymous.

After this period, I never saw Voltaire again, except once at the Théâtre-Français, on the day of the representation of *Irène*; a day of triumph to the poet, if we consider the vast applause bestowed upon one of his poorest tragedies, a proof of the excess of public enthusiasm which its author inspired.

It might, indeed, be asserted that during some weeks, there were two courts held in France, at that period, that of the King, at Versailles, and that of

Voltaire at Paris. In the former, the good King Louis preserved a simplicity free from all kind of parade, reflecting only on the reform of abuses, and the welfare of a people, too fond of glory to appreciate his modest virtues. It appeared like the peaceable retreat of a sage, when compared with the Hôtel of the Quai des Théâtres, where we daily heard the cries and exclamations of an immense crowd of admirers, all of whom were eager to pay their homage at the feet of the greatest genius of Europe.

Until that time we had seen triumphs decreed to the great characters, with justice, by the government of their country; that of Voltaire was of a new description, it was decreed by public opinion, which braved on this occasion if we may so express it, the power of the magistracy, the fulminations of the church and the authority of the monarch.

The avenger of Calas, the apostle of liberty, the persevering foe, and the fortunate vanquisher of prejudices and fanaticism, after a conflict of sixty years returned triumphant to Paris.

The French academy, in the midst of which he appeared, rose in a body and advanced towards him as he entered, and after a public homage, never accorded to any Prince, this sovereign of letters presided over the literary senate of France, over the assemblage of all those varied departments of talent, in each of which his genius had exhibited master-pieces to the world.

Returning to his residence, which appeared to

have been transformed into a palace by his presence, he took his seat amidst a sort of council composed of philosophers, and all the boldest and most celebrated writers of the age; his courtiers were the most distinguished men of all classes, the most celebrated foreigners of every country.

Guards alone appeared wanting to complete this kind of royalty, and, indeed, he almost stood in need of them to secure himself against the eagerness of the crowds, gathering on all sides to behold him, besieging his door surrounding him as he went forth, and hardly allowing room for his horses to pass along.

His coronation took place at the palace of the Tuileries in the hall of the Théâtre Français, and it is impossible to convey an idea of the extravagant joy with which the illustrious old man was received by a public that filled all the seats, the boxes, the galleries, and all the outlets of the place. At no time, did the gratitude of a nation burst forth with more lively marks of rapture.

Never shall I forget that scene; and I cannot conceive how Voltaire was enabled to summon sufficient strength to bear it. The moment he appeared, Brizard, the actor, placed upon his brows a laurel crown, which he instantly attempted to remove, but which the people with loud cries intreated him to wear. In the midst of the warmest acclamations, the titles of all his works were repeated on all sides.

Long after the curtain had been drawn up, it

was impossible for the representation to go on : each individual in the theatre was too much occupied in contemplating Voltaire, and in offering him the liveliest homage ; in fact, each spectator was himself too much an actor to attend to the actors on the stage.

Even when the general weariness permitted them to come forward, they were continually interrupted by the tumultuous feelings of the spectators. "Never," observed M. Grimm with justice, in speaking of the representation of *Irène*, "never" "was there a piece worse played, more applauded, "or that attracted less attention."

It was no sooner over, than Voltaire's bust was placed in the front of the scene ; the different actors in the tragedy gathered round it, dressed in the costume of their parts, attended by the guards who had appeared in the play, and by a crowd of spectators, who had contrived to gain admittance to the stage ; and, what was remarkable enough, the very actor who approached to crown the bust of this undaunted foe to superstition, was dressed in the monkish habit, that of *Léonce*, a character of the piece.

This bust remained upon the stage during the whole of the performance of the after-piece. It was *Nanine*, which was as little listened to, and as much applauded as *Irène* had already been. To crown this triumphant day, Voltaire had the pleasure of seeing a captain of the guards of one of our princes enter his box, commissioned to inform

him, with how much satisfaction the prince shared in the well merited homage paid to his genius by France.

Only a few days before, Voltaire had very nearly been deprived by death of so brilliant a triumph, in consequence of a violent hemorrhage, attended by the greatest danger.

The clergy no longer venturing to oppose him, now hoped to convert him. At first Voltaire yielded; he received the Abbé Gauthier, confessed himself, and wrote a profession of faith, which, without fully satisfying the priests, greatly displeased the philosophers.

After escaping the danger, he forgot his fears and his prudence. A few weeks after, upon being taken extremely ill, he refused to see a priest, and terminated, with apparent indifference, a long life, agitated by such a variety of labors, by so many storms, and radiant with so much glory.

Those who had not been able to oppose his triumph, refused him a resting place amidst the tombs of the Parisians. One of his relatives, a counsellor of the parliament, carried off his corpse, and had it speedily interred in the Abbey de Scellières, before the curate of the place had received notice of the order to refuse him burial, an order which arrived just three hours too late. Had it not been for the zeal of this friend, the remains of one of our most distinguished men, of one whose reputation had spread throughout the world, would have been left without a few feet of earth to cover them.

In spite of the efforts of the clergy, of the magistrates, and of the public authorities, who, for a time, prohibited the representation of Voltaire's plays at the theatre, and the mention of his death in our journals, Paris was inundated with showers of poetry, pamphlets, and epigrams, the only weapons with which public opinion could avenge itself upon this outrage offered to the memory of a man who had conferred lustre upon his age and country.

Among all those effusions, the one that most struck me was some lines written by the Marquise de Boufflers, mother of the chevalier of that name, the Chaulieu and the Anacréon of our times, in which, speaking of the Cæsars, she made an allusion to the Emperor Joseph II.

That monarch, only the year preceding, had visited France, under the assumed name of Count de Falkenstein; he had surprised the court by his simplicity of manners, the philosophers and the scholars by his information, and the people by his affability. The less pride he shewed, the more real elevation and dignity did they give him credit for. His popular manners formed too striking a contrast with the somewhat oriental etiquette of our own court, to escape the public observation: he seemed to countenance the new doctrines as much as he expressed his dislike to the old systems, and to all kind of superstition.

In him the character of the prince was so far lost in that of the sage, travelling to obtain new views of life and government, as to persuade some



of the zealous friends of the American revolution that he partook of their democratical feelings. A lady, warmly attached to the cause, one day, very thoughtlessly, entreated him to declare his opinion of the existing struggle between the King of England, and her colonies : " Madame," he replied, somewhat drily, " my part is that of " an aristocrat."

This monarch, whom, at that time, I very rarely saw, but whom, at a later period, I had frequent opportunities of observing when in Russia, united, in his disposition, a whimsical mixture of warlike ambition, pretensions to philosophy, a turn for innovation, and jealousy of his own authority. If our princes were so ill advised, as to risk their throne by opposing themselves too strongly to the spirit of the age, Joseph, by his desire of anticipating it, found himself deprived, for a time, of a portion of his dominions.

But the Emperor, who had attracted so much admiration and regard at Paris, by no means bore the same character, and produced the same impression in our provinces. The fine appearance of our ports, the force of our marine, the wealth of our commercial towns, and the activity of our manufactures, excited his jealousy, which he had not the art to disguise ; and lastly, though passing near Ferney, he disdained to call upon Voltaire. This indifference, on the part of a sovereign, to the claims of genius, and the weakness of the great poet and philosopher, whose self-love appeared, too evidently, wounded by so slight a

circumstance, were both equally and justly censured.

The same year in which Voltaire expired, witnessed, likewise, the decease of Rousseau. These two luminaries disappeared nearly at the same time, and at a moment when their doctrines, falsely interpreted, alike by the passions of their disciples and of their enemies, were upon the point of shaking Europe to its very foundation.

Voltaire had beheld the celebrated Franklin rejoicing in his triumph at Paris. The aged Frenchman bestowed his benediction on the son of the old American. The prayers of both were alike offered up for the welfare of their respective countries, but how different was the result! The immense ocean, the extent of the American continent, and the absence of the most formidable dangers that menace all governments, namely, the privileged classes and the classes destitute of all property, fostered the seeds of freedom in America, whilst in France, on the contrary, they could only strike a feeble root in a soil inundated with blood, and torn by all the elements of hatred and discord.

The death of Voltaire was attended with the same splendid publicity as his life. The end of Rousseau was sorrowful and silent. The friend of nature, he avoided mankind, whom he believed to be his enemies; and the man who had poured such light upon the world, disappeared amid the shades of those woods, where he rejoiced to terminate in peace a wretched existence.

The death of these two chiefs of the modern

philosophy excited a very deceitful joy in the breasts of their adversaries. They believed, for a moment, they had triumphed, forgetting, doubtless, that, though men of genius may die, their thoughts are immortal.

But, in France, our attention was speedily withdrawn from events so important to the republic of letters: the incidents of the war, that had just broken out, occupied the speculations of all, inasmuch as they involved all interests.

To the astonishment of Europe, which imagined that our navy, destroyed during the late war, could hardly be, in so short a time, restored, there appeared, in addition to the fleet sent under the command of M. d'Estaing, to America, a naval force, consisting of thirty-two ships of the line, and fifteen frigates, which sailed from the port of Brest, under the orders of Count d'Orvilliers. Its three divisions were commanded by the admirals de Guichen, Duchafaut, and Lamotte-Piquet. The latter, by the prudence of his counsels, directed the ardor of the Duke de Chartres, the first prince of the blood who sailed on board his vessel.

The English admiral, Keppel, at the head of a squadron, equally strong, advanced to meet the French. He was aware of their bravery, but was surprised to see the regular order of our line of battle, the skill of our manœuvres, and the rapid progress of our naval science.

The battle was fierce and sanguinary; many vessels suffered dreadfully in the loss of men, masts, and rigging; but as, on either side, not a

single vessel struck its colors, the battle ended without any decisive result. England, too long accustomed to naval triumphs, considered it a defeat, because we had not been beaten ; while France seemed to claim the victory, because she had not received a check.

The Duke de Chartres, returning with the fleet into port, appeared too soon in Paris. In the outset, he was enthusiastically praised, laurel crowns were thrown at his feet in the theatre, and songs of triumph resounded on all sides. Both court and city abandoned themselves to the illusion.

Soon, however, further details of the affair arrived ; the enthusiasm vanished, and eulogies gave place to epigrams. The Count d'Orvilliers was accused of too great circumspection ; the Duke de Chartres of neglecting an order, by the execution of which he would have succeeded in breaking the enemy's line of battle. He was deprived of his command, and appointed colonel-general of the dragoons, an unwelcome appointment, which irritated him, appeared to him an affront, and subsequently, perhaps, gave rise to such a number of faults and misfortunes.

England, on her side, investigated the conduct of Admirals Kepple and Palisser ; but this inquiry, like the combat that had given rise to it, led to no result.

The Count d'Orvilliers and his enemy were again opposed to each other at sea ; but whether it was owing to the winds, or to the fault of the com-

manders themselves, the two fleets appeared rather to shun than to seek each other.

In the meanwhile, our commerce suffered, and, as our ministers had neglected to take due precautions for its protection, the English made a number of prizes. Hence many bitter complaints were preferred, and very generally diffused, against the royal navy, by the mercantile interest; only a prelude to those violent quarrels soon destined to take place, both by land and sea, between the democracy and the aristocracy.

Our wounded vanity, nevertheless, was in some measure soothed by the gallantry displayed by our frigates, many of which signalized themselves in single engagements. An officer of marine, M. de Fabry, took several English convoys.

About the same period a great number of regiments were marched towards our coasts. These movements were calculated to nourish our warmest hopes; but, on approaching nearer the ocean, we trembled with impatience at the sight of this insurmountable barrier which impeded our steps. We had flattered ourselves that our naval squadrons would open us a passage, but their return to port tended to discourage us.

It formed, altogether, a singular contrast at that period, to observe, on one side, the grave deportment of our young men, discussing with sages the most important questions in philosophy, the serious interest we attached to the most

trifling incidents of the war, and our passionate regard for every thing that wore the semblance of glory or freedom ; and, on the other hand, the carelessness and frivolity of our first minister, a man of eighty, who then ruled the state.

At a time when every individual, both in the city and at court, was employed in blaming or defending the conduct of our naval commanders, and while we were deeply chagrined at the little success that attended their efforts, M. de Maurepas, younger than the rest of us, amused himself with all these grave matters, by making them the inexhaustible subject of his jests and witticisms.

“ Do you know,” he exclaimed, “ what a naval battle really is ? I will tell you : two squadrons set sail from two opposite ports ; they manœuvre, they engage, they fire a few cannon balls, they knock down a few masts and a few men, and tatter a few of the sails ; a great deal of powder and shot is expended ; at length both fleets sheer off, each pretending that it remained master of the field of battle ; each claims the victory, and a *Te Deum* is sung on both sides, while the sea remains just as salt as before.” Fortunately, the rest of the ministers were accustomed to treat state affairs a little more seriously.

All my endeavors to obtain employment in some expedition were still unsuccessful, and I vented my spite against my unlucky lot, which doomed me to remain colonel of dragoons,

during a war in which the infantry only were embarked, and had a chance of coming to action.

Several of my friends, some older, and some about my own age, were more fortunate, and excited my envy; the Duke de Lauzun, having embarked with the Marquis de Vaudreuil, made a descent in Africa, and took Senegal. Arthur and Edward Dillon, the Marquis de Coigny and the Viscount de Noailles, served under the orders of M. de Bouillé and M. d'Estaing. The former took possession of Dominica, and, subsequently, of the Island of St. Lucia, by surprise.

Admiral Byron, whom the Count d'Estaing had in vain attempted to bring to action near Rhode-Island, having reached the Antilles, suddenly changed our fortune, by wresting from us the very Island of St. Lucia, of which we had just made ourselves masters. In a little while, however, the Count d'Estaing, who, at that period, had left the United States, notwithstanding the entreaties of Washington and La Fayette, and the more bitter reproaches of General Sullivan, arrived in the port of Martinique.

From that point, being strengthened by a squadron and by troops dispatched from France, he made an attack upon St. Lucia, though without being able to force the harbour. Disembarking on the island, his valiant efforts were equally unsuccessful; and, after great loss, he was repulsed.

At length, fortune, which had until then proved so unfavorable to him, offered an occasion of re-

pairing his reverses ; he resumed the offensive, possessed himself of St. Vincent, and made a descent upon the Isle of Grenada with three thousand men. It was defended by General Macartney with a thousand select troops and a numerous militia.

The town of Grenada was situated upon a steep hill. M. d'Estaing, marching in three columns, ordered an assault, and, in spite of the most vigorous resistance, carried by storm the entrenchments, the hill and the town.

The Viscount de Noailles and Arthur Dillon greatly distinguished themselves at the head of two of our columns. Dillon was wounded, but did not retire until after the action. M. d'Estaing, also, was slightly wounded.

Admiral Byron had sailed with all expedition to oppose our triumph, but arrived too late, Grenada had already submitted. M. d'Estaing, having re-embarked, engaged the English fleet, damaged three of their vessels, and pursued the remainder, without being able to reach them, as far as the port of the Island of St. Christopher, where they took shelter.

In this way we became masters of the Antilles. The Count Theodore de Lameth, who had distinguished himself in the attack, was the first to carry tidings of the capture of Grenada to France ; and thus our earliest exploit, magnified by report, produced as great a sensation at Paris as the most brilliant victories formerly would have done.



The English, in the meanwhile, carrying their arms into the southern provinces of the United States, had possessed themselves of Savannah in the State of Georgia. The Count d'Estaing formed the design of wresting from them this important acquisition.

His disembarkation was covered by the American troops, and his forces, united to these, amounted to eight thousand men; with which he marched rapidly against Savannah, whose garrison he summoned to surrender.

The English governor, who had not completed his preparations for defence, pretended to capitulate, gained time, received succour, and succeeded in fortifying his intrenchments.

D'Estaing, enraged to find himself the dupe of such an artifice, determined to carry the place by storm. In this desperate contest both the besiegers and the besieged displayed the most obstinate efforts of valor. A number of brave French and Americans twice succeeded in reaching the intrenchments, but the heavy fire of artillery mowed them down. There fell Pulawski, the intrepid Pole, who died fighting for that liberty in another hemisphere, which had been destroyed in his own country.

After many repeated but unsuccessful attacks, in which the French and Americans lost nearly twelve hundred men, the Count d'Estaing, himself wounded, ordered a retreat. He then re-embarked, returned to the Antilles, and thence to France in a single vessel, leaving the others under

the command of the Count de Grasse and the generals Vaudreuil and Lamotte-Piquet.

M. d'Estaing met with an honorable reception in France ; public feeling was just towards him, and the fame of his valor obliterated the faults committed by his impetuosity, insomuch, that, in spite of his bad fortune, he failed not to preserve his reputation.

The Count de Vergennes, minister for foreign affairs, obtained, during this year, no slight advantages, by the skill and wisdom of his policy. Spain and Holland entered into strict alliance with us, and the Empress of Russia, by a declaration of armed neutrality, to which the Kings of Denmark and Sweden likewise acceded, made the English sensible that they were in danger of losing the dominion, or rather the tyranny, of the seas.

So many military and political events kept the public mind in a state of anxious activity ; for the public spirit of that period certainly exhibited a greater degree of ardor and independence than has since appeared under institutions, liberal indeed in name, but which the passions of each party, as it prevailed in its turn, have hitherto rendered but too illusory.

True it is, we could boast neither of elections nor of national parliaments ; by old prescriptive customs the prince was our sole legislator ; but the royal authority found, in the supreme courts and privileged orders themselves, and in all classes of society, a feeling of honour, and a freedom of

opinion which resisted even more efficaciously than laws, the yoke of arbitrary power. In point of law, we were subjects; in point of fact, we were citizens.

Every one took an interest in public matters, and it was thus that, observing to what a degree the national manners had become republican, under monarchical forms of government, it was not difficult for Rousseau to predict the approach of great revolutions. That celebrated writer, by this prediction, shewed himself more clear-sighted than the Empress of Russia and the monarchs of Spain and France, who, in this war, contemplated only the humiliation of England by her American colonies, without perceiving that the young eagle of liberty, soaring over another hemisphere, would ere long, also spread her wings over Europe.

Frederick himself, ventured in his writings to censure the arbitrary conduct of the English government, and highly approved of the principles which led to the American congress to proclaim the right of a people to separate from its government, when that government violates instead of protecting its welfare and its liberties.

The year 1779 revived for a period our hope of no longer remaining idle spectators of the contest. The King assembled large bodies of troops upon the sea-coast. Two camps were formed; one at Vaussieux in Normandy, another at Paramé in Brittany. The first was placed under the command of the Marshal de Broglie, the second under that of M. de Castries. The

office of our minister was besieged by crowds of young men, all eager to be enrolled in the number of our troops destined for the service of these camps. It was considered as the greatest misfortune that could happen, to remain inactive in garrison, while a descent upon England was in preparation. The avenues of Versailles were no longer thronged by courtiers desirous of favor ; crowds of candidates were, indeed, there, but it was to solicit posts of peril and of glory.

I was one of those unfortunate individuals who beheld their regiments condemned to remain inactive. I had only one hope left,—that of joining the armies of the coast, as a staff-officer ; but this appointment was not to be obtained without extreme difficulty and great influence.

The minister was embarrassed in what manner to refuse so many petitions, strongly supported by the most influential persons, and even by the royal family. It was impossible however, to oblige every body. The number of vacant appointments was soon filled up, only one or two remained which were the objects of the most eager and most active emulation.

At last I succeeded, by dint of applications, and the influence of the Queen, in obtaining leave to serve in the camp of Paramé, in the capacity of Assistant Quarter-Master General ; but M. de Maurepas, at the same time, exacted my word of honor to keep the matter secret, until I should have actually arrived at the head-quarters of M. de Castries, a circumstance which proves the

weakness of the government against the complaints and the warlike ardour of our young courtiers.

I faithfully performed my promise, but on reaching the camp of Paramé, I found that M. de Castries was himself unacquainted with my appointment; and, as I had not brought the formal document of my nomination, which had been promised to me, I was greatly embarrassed how to act. M. de Castries relieved me from this embarrassment by permitting me to assume the uniform of aide de camp, and discharge its duties near his person. At the end of a few days, I at last received the minister's letter, and entered at once upon the dress and functions of an officer of the staff.

We spent our time in exercises and evolutions, in feigned attacks and defence, disembarkments and reconnoitring. These shadows and mockeries of war made us sigh with redoubled earnestness for its realities. In fact, our warlike games were real entertainments; people ran from all the towns to witness them, and even several of the fashionable women of Paris came to enjoy this military spectacle.

The ardor of our youth at that period partook more of our characteristic vivacity than of subordination, as a single anecdote will exemplify. During one of our grand manœuvres, a select number of places had been reserved for the ladies upon a hill. Two colonels of our army, conducting each a lady, who had just arrived from court, made their way a little hastily through the

crowd, and in order to obtain accommodation for the ladies under their care, they possessed themselves of some seats belonging to other ladies of Brittany, which gave rise to some altercation.

The ensuing morning, the report of this quarrel spread throughout the camp. A singular abuse had been suffered to prevail for a very long time back amongst all our military ; it consisted of an association of young lieutenants and sub-lieutenants, entitled *la calotte* ; which held its assemblies, had its officers, its general, and its whimsical though severe police ; and affected to acknowledge no superiority, and no distinction of ranks. This ridiculous, and at the same time turbulent and formidable body, submitted to no authority except when under arms, and inflicted without mercy ludicrous chastisements upon all those whom it pleased to consider guilty of a fault against its capricious laws, and the rules of propriety and politeness.

In the interval between our exercises, all the young men of the army were accustomed to assemble for the purpose of playing at prison-bars, and attracted a vast crowd of spectators. One day, as they were all assembled to begin the game, two officers, my friends, came to inform me that a shameful proceeding was upon the point of taking place, the *calotte* having seriously resolved that the two colonels, of whom I have spoken, should be publicly tossed in a blanket, in order to revenge the insult offered to the ladies of Brittany.

There was not a moment to lose. The game was about to begin, and the sentence was intended to be put into immediate execution. Not having either time or means of consultation with any one, I ordered the drums to beat to arms. In an instant the games and the uproar ceased, disorder gave place to discipline. Each ran to his standard, and the next moment we were ranged in order of battle.

In the mean while, I had hastened to inform M. de Castries, whom I found not a little surprised, as may readily be supposed, at this unexpected alarm. Upon explaining to him the cause, he approved of what I had done, ordered several manœuvres, and when the retreat was sounded, every one imagined it was the general who had wished to assure himself of the promptitude with which the troops could take to their arms, form their ranks, and return to order. The next day our wiser officers began to negotiate, our more fiery spirits became calm, and some severe orders soon checked the license of the tribunals of the *calotte*.

In the midst of our evolutions, and of our festivals, and games, all insufficient to soothe our eager impatience, one idea only seriously occupied our minds. This was our anxiety to behold the moment, when we should embark to spring on the English coast; and appearances every where seemed to combine to strengthen and justify our hopes.

General La Fayette, in the persuasion that the descent would really take place, had quitted the army of Washington, in order to serve under the banners of his country. He had received the appointment of Major-General of the army commanded by the Marshall de Broglie. When on the point of acting, both the cabinets of France and Spain seemed to recollect, as if by chance, that they long had been actively engaged in war, without having yet declared it, and it was in this year that their manifestoes first appeared.

On the third of June, 1779, thirty-two French men of war issued from the port of Brest, and thirty-four Spanish ships, from Cadiz.

The English admiral Hardy, commanding a squadron of thirty-eight vessels, hastened with all sail to oppose the junction of the allied fleets. But he was too late, they having united their forces on the 25th day of June. Their combined strength thus composed a fleet of sixty-six ships of war, besides a great number of frigates, under the command of Admiral d'Orvilliers, and the Spanish General Don Gaston. At the same time, our coasts were covered with transports, the sight of which inspired us with hope and ardour.

Never was there more reason to believe a grand undertaking near its execution, and never was expectation more completely deceived. The combined squadrons gave chase to Admiral Hardy, without being able to overtake him; and afterwards appeared before Plymouth, with the view



of possessing themselves of that port. An English sixty-four gun ship, sailing out of it, was captured by some of our vessels.

Orders had already been issued, and the attack was about to commence, when a dreadful hurricane suddenly dispersed our fleets. Admiral Hardy, who had hitherto not ventured to make any effort to protect Plymouth, succeeded, during the gale, in effecting his entrance into the harbour. When the winds became calm, our admirals vainly attempted to bring Hardy to action; he succeeded in sheltering himself from our attempts.

Contagious diseases soon after made their appearance in our fleets, the crews of which were greatly discouraged. The admirals d'Orvilliers, Guichen, Gaston and Cordova, confessing themselves vanquished, not by their enemies, but by the elements, returned to their respective ports, and their retreat baffled all our fond hopes of battle and glory.

We were now indignant; the two camps resounded with complaints and reproaches against the administration, and more especially against that of our marine. The troops destined for embarkation were again ordered back into their respective garrisons. I returned to Paris with the generals and the officers of the staff, where we very soon communicated to the whole capital the dissatisfaction which we ourselves felt, and not without reason, at the wretched conclusion

of a scene which had been opened with so much splendor.

For a long period, we had been accused by foreigners of excessive levity, because we were accustomed, under the most serious circumstances, to vent our discontent against government, rather in epigrams, bons mots, and even songs, than by a manly opposition. Our accusers ought, however, to have reflected that this apparent levity was only the inevitable result of the gradual destruction of our liberties. Power having become absolute, had left us no other weapons than those of ridicule, the influence of which is greater than is generally supposed.

In other countries the people bow their necks to the yoke of ministerial despotism without a murmur, and not only do they cringe with abject servility, but they observe a disgraceful silence under their wrongs. In France, on the contrary, though force had deprived us of the power of action, it was never found practicable to enslave our minds and to reduce them to silence, so, that, if the government exercised a supreme authority of action, we knew how to gain possession of the power of opinion, a power so great and so strongly supported by a sense of honor, that it frequently acted as a sufficient counterpoise to arrest despotism in its career.

It is true that those who thus ventured to launch their cutting epigrams against the supreme authority, were occasionally visited with

punishment, and, like the bee that leaves its sting in the wound it inflicts, suffered, for a period, for the pain they had occasioned.

M. de Maurepas had remained in exile during twenty-five years, for writing a song. The same cause long prevented the Chevalier de Boufflers from obtaining the promotion he was justly entitled to.

All these inconveniences were now, however, lost sight of; and we defied them, in order to indulge the pleasure of attacking the injustice, the imbecility or the folly of power, by the only means which were at our command. In default of the *tribune*,\* the drawing-room was our field of battle, and, deprived of the means of fighting pitched battles, it was by light skirmishes that our repressed liberty still shewed that its fire was rather concealed than extinguished.

At the period when public opinion vented itself in discontent at the conduct of the ministry in a campaign, so imposing in its outset, and so burlesque at its conclusion, pamphlets and epigrams were showered down on every side. While, at the camp of Paramé, I had myself ventured to launch a few couplets against the minister of marine, which met with tolerable success, not because they were good, but because they were lively, satirical, and hit the humor of the time. A remark of the Duke de Choiseul's

\* A kind of pulpit, which each member of a public assembly ascends in his turn when he wishes to speak.—*Translator*.

was much in vogue about this same period ; he had said *that the watches of ministers were always six months too slow*, and this observation I took for the chorus of my song.

A few days after my return to Paris, happening to be at the royal hunting party, the King called me near his person. It is well known that the benevolence, and we may add, the good nature so remarkable in the character of this monarch, were usually concealed under an exterior somewhat rude, a harsh look and a very abrupt address. “ I am informed,” he said, with an air which to me appeared very severe, “ that you “ have taken the liberty of writing some very satiric and very lively verses, but somewhat “ scandalous, and such as no one would very “ readily avow.”

Attempting to surmount my embarrassment, I replied, that the dislike I felt to remaining inactive in the midst of a camp whence I had hoped we should sally to carry the terror of his Majesty’s arms into England, had driven me to the necessity of seeking some kind of alleviation for my ennui. “ Well, well,” replied he, “ let us “ hear your song ; repeat it to me.”

I was on the point of obeying, and of thus bringing myself precisely into the dilemma I wished to avoid, when happily a sudden thought came to my relief. “ Sire,” I answered, “ I “ have unfortunately written many songs ; so “ that I hardly know to which your Majesty is “ pleased to allude.” “ They are,” returned

the King, “ some rather free couplets upon jealous people deceived.”

I then began to breathe ; I sang him my verses in a low voice, which assuredly contained nothing political. He laughed heartily, and left me extremely happy in having thus, by mere chance, extricated myself from a situation in which another step would most probably have drawn upon me the vexation of a compulsory sojourn of, at least, two or three months in a garrison.

The year 1780 seemed to promise, from its commencement, events of a more important and decisive character. The Statholder in vain endeavored to calm the irritation felt by the English government towards the republican party ; England menaced the Dutch possessions in India, a conquest which she greatly coveted, and thus compelled Holland soon to increase the number of her enemies. The Spaniards and the French formed together the siege of Gibraltar ; but Admiral Rodney succeeded in revictualling that fortress, in spite of the efforts of the Spanish admiral, Don Juan de Langara, to prevent him.

In the Antilles, the Count de Guichen, who had replaced the Count d'Estaing, maintained the honor of our arms. He had twenty-two vessels under his command, while his adversary, Admiral Rodney, set sail with twenty, to offer him battle. The engagement was renewed in three different attacks, but Rodney was unable to break our line. The loss on both sides was nearly

equal; but the English, in each of these engagements, found themselves compelled to retire, and lost a man of war which had been riddled with bullets.

We were afterwards joined by a Spanish squadron, which gave us an indisputable superiority. The junction took place between Martinique and Guadaloupe, notwithstanding all the manœuvres of Rodney.

The Count de Guichen already believed himself assured of the conquest of Jamaica and other islands; but he and Don Solano were never able to agree upon their plan of attack.

The English alone, at that period, were acquainted with those salutary precautions, prescribed by the science of medicine, as necessary to preserve health amongst the crews of a naval force. In this respect our ministers were guilty of the most fatal carelessness. A contagious disease infected our fleets, and rendered it an utter impossibility to undertake any important operation.

During this period the Americans assailed us with just reproaches upon the neglect of our promises, and our abandonment of their interest, at a crisis of their affairs which was becoming more and more imminent.

The consequences of the check we received at Savannah had been fatal. Lord Cornwallis had possessed himself of Georgia and of the two Carolinas; and shortly after became master of

Charlestown. The royal party, or, as they were called, the Tories, appeared to gain fresh strength.

The patriots were in consternation. The levies no longer supplied them with men. It was even to be feared, at the time, that the southern provinces, destitute of resources, would fall without an effort into the hands of the English.

Fortunately, the heroic courage of the women reanimated that of their husbands, their fathers and their sons, whose patriotism they excited by their prayers, by their reproaches, and even by their example.

The inhabitants, on all sides, rushed to arms, and the republicans, by renewed efforts of valor and resolution, shewed themselves so worthy of the assistance they implored from France, that our ministry, at length, surmounting their usual indolence, resolved to send a force to their aid.

In the north, Washington, undismayed amidst reverses, still firm, when all around him seemed to despair, quieted the alarms of the Congress, maintained the discipline of his army, and held in check, without compromising himself, the formidable force of General Clinton. His country incessantly found in the resources of his lofty spirit, all the courage and ardor necessary to overcome so many obstacles, and to resist such formidable foes.

Fortune, at length, seconded his genius. He had the pleasure of seeing M. de La Luzerne, the accredited ambassador of France, arrive in Ame-

rica with La Fayette. They were instructed by our government to announce the speedy approach of a French army, commanded by the Count de Rochambeau.

The news of this event, which did not happen till three months after, changed the face of affairs, and Lord Cornwallis, who received notice of it from General Clinton, was at once arrested in the career of his great projects.

The Chevalier de Ternay, commanding a squadron of seven men of war, and a great number of merchant vessels, destined to transport the French army to America, set sail from Brest in the month of May.

But our maritime resources, which had been exhausted in sending considerable forces, under M. de Guichen, to the Antilles, were not sufficient to provide for the embarkation of the twelve thousand men commanded by Rochambeau. That general, therefore, set sail with only his first division, composed of six thousand men. He was assured that the second division should follow without delay, but this promise was never performed.

Our squadron under M. de Ternay was retarded in its passage by a violent gale, which, for the space of four days, dispersed his convoy; but speedily re-assembling it, he continued his voyage.

Near the south of the Bermudas he fell in with six English men of war; a sharp action, which continued until night, ensued, when M. de Ternay, preferring the execution of his orders to the



trifling honor of taking an English ship, which had compromised its own safety, prosecuted his voyage, and arrived upon the Virginian coasts.

There he learned that Charlestown had been captured by the English, that Lord Cornwallis had received a reinforcement of five thousand men, and that Admiral Arbuthnot cruised in those parts, expecting the arrival of Admiral Graves, who was to join him. M. de Ternay steered out of the bay of the Chesapeake, and, on the 17th of July, entered the port of Rhode-Island, after a navigation of seventy days.

Since the expedition of M. d'Estaing, the English had evacuated the island. The French army disembarked there, and encamped near New-Port, the capital of the place. M. de Rochambeau speedily caused all the points to be fortified upon which it was possible for the English to effect a landing.

General Clinton, learning the arrival of the French army, while shut up in New-York, immediately apprized Lord Cornwallis, and these tidings arrested his march at a moment when that general believed himself on the point of subduing the whole of Virginia.

The disembarcation of our forces revived the hopes of Washington, and of the Congress. The period was critical; the American notes were falling rapidly; the levies were slowly effected; and a spirit of insubordination appeared in Washington's army, who, having despatched a part of his troops into the south, found himself compelled to act upon the defensive, in the Jerseys.

In a short time, twenty English vessels were seen to approach, with a view of attacking the French squadron in its moorings. It was found, however, to occupy so excellent a position, that they were compelled to relinquish their object. General Clinton had embarked with ten thousand men, to make a descent upon Rhode-Island ; but the French army, reinforced by three thousand Americans, led by generals La Fayette and Heats, had adopted such measures of defence, that General Clinton did not persist in his project ; from which he was further deterred by learning the approach of General Washington towards New York.

Some disputes arose between M. de Rochambeau and the American generals : the latter being desirous that the army should evacuate Rhode-Island, in order to unite with that of Washington, and undertake the siege of New York.

It was with difficulty, M. de Rochambeau succeeded in dissuading Washington from so rash an enterprize, which would have rendered the loss of Rhode-Island certain, and afforded no hopes of success against a city so strongly fortified as New-York, and defended by fourteen thousand men.

At this period intelligence was received of the total defeat of General Gates, at Campden, in the south, by the army of Lord Cornwallis.

Admiral Rodney, shortly after, arrived at New-York, with the whole of his force, which tripled that of Admiral Graves. Our Army thus remained blocked up in Rhode-Island.

At the same time we heard of the treason of General Arnold, who had hitherto covered himself with glory, in the cause of America. Bartering his conscience and his country for English lucre, he attempted to put the enemy in possession of the port of West-Point, upon the river Hudson. That place was the military *dépôt* of America, and considered as the key of the United States.

The imprudence of a young English officer, Major André, led to the discovery of the plot. He was arrested, and condemned to death as a spy. The traitor Arnold, unfortunately, receiving timely notice, found means to effect his escape to New-York, where he offered the aid of his perfidious arm to the English.

In the month of November, Admiral Rodney again set sail for the islands. Arbuthnot, with twelve vessels, continued the blockade of Rhode-Island, during the winter.

General Washington despatched a force under General Green, into Virginia, for the purpose of collecting the remnant of the Army of General Gates.

The Chevalier de Ternay dying at New-Port, the command of the French squadron devolved upon the Chevalier Destouches, the next officer in seniority.

Our compulsory inaction, together with the reverses met with by the Americans in the south, damped the courage of a great part of Washington's army. It rose into open mutiny; and, in

order to restore discipline, the American hero displayed a rare union of mildness and firmness, which contributed as much to his glory as his most brilliant military exploits.

In the mean while, the traitor Arnold embarked at the head of some English troops at New York. He made a descent upon Virginia, at Chesapeake bay, and committed the greatest excesses throughout that state. His military talents, which had been more laudably employed elsewhere, found little opposition from an irregular militia, too ill disciplined to offer effectual resistance.

Under these embarrassments, Congress despatched Colonel Lawrens, an aide-de-camp of Washington's, to France. This officer's father, formerly president of the Congress, had been captured and confined in the Tower of London. The object of the colonel's mission was to apprise the court of Versailles of the critical situation of his country, and to solicit immediate assistance.

Notwithstanding the disadvantageous position of the French army, the Chevalier Destouches, in the hope of checking the fatal progress of Arnold in Virginia, collected a small squadron, composed of a vessel of the line, and three frigates, which he despatched under the command of M. de Tilly. He, in part, succeeded in his object ; having secretly made sail in the night, he arrived at the mouth of river Elizabeth, and, pursuing his course up that river, made several prizes, and captured the ship *Romulus* of forty guns. A

violent gale, which sprung up at the same time, dismasted two English vessels, and drove two more on shore.

The commanders, de Rochambeau and Destouches, informed of this disaster, took advantage of it ; and, while General Washington sent La Fayette with a thousand men, to unite with the Virginians against Arnold, M. de Rochambeau despatched M. Destouches, with a detachment, of the same force, intended to co-operate with that of La Fayette, and attack Arnold on the side of Portsmouth. M. de Vioménil had the command of this expedition. M. Destouches set sail with eight vessels, and, near Chesapeake bay, he encountered the British fleet, under the orders of Admiral Graves.

The two squadrons were of equal force, and the combat was warm and sanguinary. M. de Marigny, and M. de la Clocheterie greatly distinguished themselves. Three English and two French ships were completely disabled. In this action the Marquis de Laval was wounded. The English squadron was the first to steer away, while M. Destouches and M. de Vioménil returned to New-Port.

We were informed, some time afterwards, that General Green, who had engaged Lords Rawsdon and Cornwallis with great valor, still continued, by the skill of his movements, to hold them in check, though he had thrice been compelled to retreat, in three battles, which conferred as much honor upon the vanquished as the victors.

It was not long before M. de Rochambeau received tidings from France. There was a change in the ministry ; M. de Castries took the department of the marine, and, shortly after, my father succeeded to M. de Montbarrey as minister of war.

M. de la Peyrouse conveyed, in a frigate, to M. de Rochambeau, fifteen hundred thousand francs, with the promise of fresh reinforcements.

In the south, La Fayette, having joined, in Virginia, the Baron de Stuben and the Virginian militia, continually harrassed the enemy by his sudden attacks, while, by his skilful retreats, he evaded the attempts of his adversaries, and, by occupying strong positions, found means to arrest their progress.

It was at this period that generals Washington and Rochambeau conceived the design of uniting their forces near the river Hudson, in order, by menacing New York, to be enabled, should circumstances permit, to march subsequently to the aid of Virginia.

While awaiting a favorable opportunity for the execution of his purpose, Washington sent General Vaine with the Pennsylvanian regulars, to re-inforce the army of La Fayette.

At the opening of this arduous campaign, La Fayette's forces were in want of every thing, money, clothing, linen and tents. The memorable patriotism of the women of Baltimore, however, supplied all these wants.

Soon after the *chef-d'escadre* Barras, destined to replace the Chevalier de Ternay arrived at

Boston. He informed M. de Rochambeau of M. de Suffren's departure from France with a force, to India, and that the Count de Grasse, with a strong squadron was preparing to sail for the Antilles and subsequently for the coasts of America in order to disengage our squadron, almost continually blockaded by the English.

The French minister left the Count de Rochambeau at liberty to concert with Washington and the Count de Grasse such expeditions as he should deem advisable whether in the northern or southern states of America. In conformity, therefore, with the despatches of M. de Castries and my father, a conference was held at Wether-Field, between the Generals Rochambeau, Washington, Knox and Chastellux. The appearance of the English squadron prevented the *chef-d'escadre* Barras from being present at the meeting.

Washington either with a view of deceiving General Clinton, or with real designs upon the place, prevailed upon the council to undertake the attack of New-York, although M. de Rochambeau had at first proposed to employ the allied forces upon the Chesapeake.

Advice was sent to M. de Grasse of the plans fixed upon for this purpose, in which he was requested to co-operate with the whole of his force. It will soon, however, appear, that the project relative to the Virginian expedition at last prevailed.

Just at the period when M. de Rochambeau and his army had received orders to sail for Ame-

rica, my nephew, the Viscount de Noailles had found means by his own influence and that of his family, to attain the object he had in view, he received the rank of lieutenant-colonel of the regiment of Soissonnais, and embarked at the head of this force for the United-States. Thus, out of the three friends who had first conceived the design, in France, of engaging in the American cause, I was the only one whom fortune obstinately persevered in chaining down to our garri-sons. I was in despair ; but the sudden change that took place in our government, came to support my courage and to revive my hopes. The general opinion had declared so unanimously against two of our ministers, that the court felt the necessity of choosing men of sufficient ability to conduct the war with the activity it required. It was under these circumstances that the King confided the ministry of war to my father, and that of the marine to the Marquis de Castries.

The nomination, however, of the latter preceded my father's by several months. It must be confessed, that very general dissatisfaction then prevailed at the conduct of the Prince de Montbarrey and of M. de Sartines.

The latter, indeed, had displayed great ability in the administration of police ; but this was no reason why he should make a good minister of marine, and assuredly it was the levity of M. de Maurepas alone, that could account for such an appointment.

As he had promoted him, however, to the



office, he supported him, for a period, against public opinion. But when M. Necker declared that the administration of this office was found burdened with a debt of twenty millions, the King resolved to dismiss M. de Sartines.

I cannot well assign the motive which has, almost invariably, induced our monarchs to refuse the administration of the marine to one of that profession ; but facts demonstrate that this prejudice, or this rule, has invariably prevailed.

At this period the Queen possessed great influence over her royal consort, and conscientiously attempted to direct it only to the public good, consulting, as far as lay in her power, the feelings of the public ; and, notwithstanding all the calumnies forged by the meanest envy, her friend, Madame de Polignac, informed her of the truth, and advised her to exert her interest only in favor of persons who were universally respected.

The reason of this was quite natural. Madame de Polignac resembled none of those favorites whose portraits history has preserved. She had no ambition to aggrandize her family, no avarice of her own to gratify ; and the honors which she had avoided came to solicit her acceptance. It was necessary to compel her to receive any favors. A sincere friend, it was not the Queen, it was Marie Antoinette, whom she loved ; and, in all the advice which she gave her, she had only the reputation and honor of her mistress in view.

The men admitted to her most intimate society

were not exempt either from intrigue or ambition ; but they would not have retained her favor had they not been distinguished by elevation of sentiment, and the most delicate honor. With such qualities they seconded the honest and useful views of Madame de Polignac, while, on her part, she succeeded, by her mildness and good sense, in moderating their character, and in restraining their personal ambition within due bounds.

The Queen's object was to oppose the credit of M. de Maurepas, too much disposed, both from frivolity and inveterate habit, to be influenced in his choice of persons by intrigue rather than by merit.

M. de Castries had merited and obtained general esteem, by his integrity, his information, his activity, and his courage. He was considered one of our best general officers ; and, though he did not possess a vast or brilliant genius, his understanding was strong, cool, and enlightened, a quality better adapted for a minister, than greater brilliancy, with a less regulated mind.

The Queen, by the advice of her friend, proposed the nomination of M. de Castries to the King. M. Necker powerfully seconded her views, while M. de Maurepas, on this occasion, opposed but a feeble resistance.

It was otherwise, however, upon the nomination of my father. The first minister, not through firmness, but rather from weakness, obstinately supported the Prince de Montbarrey, who was in-

debted for his elevation to the post of minister of war, only to the friendship, the interest and the entreaties of Madame de Maurepas.

A brave and intelligent officer, M. de Montbarrey had no inclination for a life of business ; he was unable to resist the solicitations of women, and permitted himself to be governed by his secretaries. There were very general complaints made, with reason, against the relaxation which his weakness suffered to be introduced into our discipline.

He wished to act rightly, but he had not sufficient firmness for that purpose. Yielding to the importunities of the courtiers, he struck upon a rock, which has been and will continue to be fatal to so many ministers who forget, that justice, order and regularity, form the surest rampart in defence of their influence and their places. They are not aware that those very persons, who persuade or compel them to sacrifice general views to private interests, will speedily punish them, and ungratefully unite, under the standard of public opinion, to assist in their overthrow.

The weight of this opinion produced the fall of M. de Montbarrey, in spite of all the efforts of M. de Maurepas. But if the court was agreed upon his dismissal, it was several months before it could come to an understanding as to the appointment of his successor.

The Queen had been informed, by persons whom she had consulted, that my father enjoyed

a well merited reputation, throughout the whole army, for his long services, the number of his wounds, his application to study, and his familiarity with all the branches of the art of war and of military administration. They dwelt upon his inflexible justice, his moderation, his zeal for discipline, and his disinterestedness.

He was destitute, indeed, of two qualities very necessary to the attainment of great fortune ; he had neither the adroitness of a courtier, nor versatility in his principles. All self interest was lost, in his estimation, the moment it seemed to be opposed to his duty. His frankness was a little unceremonious ; he knew how to serve, but not how to please : in a word, he was a perfectly good man, but a very unskilful courtier.

Thus, though he was called into the field on all perilous occasions, and consulted by the ministers in all affairs that required prudence and information ; he was no longer thought of when favors were to be conferred ; nor would his modesty ever have permitted him to obtain, or even to dream of his appointment to a seat in the cabinet.

This was effected solely by the intense zeal of his friends, who were found to be precisely those of Madame de Polignac. The opinions of M. Necker and of M. de Castries, seconded their efforts, and all these springs were put into action long before he became aware of the circumstance.

As the Queen had never heard a single voice

raised to contradict the good opinion she had been led to entertain of my father, she felt assured that she was about to promote an excellent choice, and spoke warmly of him to the King, who only sought to obtain men capable of realizing his wise and virtuous intentions, for the welfare of France.

M. de Maurepas was at first greatly embarrassed as to the conduct he ought to pursue, having been the intimate friend of my grandmother, his contemporary, no one knew my father better than he did, and he could not conscientiously object to him.

Still, the more such a nomination appeared to claim approbation, the more certain it rendered M. de Montbarrey's dismissal, whom he had hoped, until then, to be able to maintain in his post.

Chance assisted him better than his reflections: my father, scarcely recovered from a long and violent attack of the gout, was too eager to return thanks to the Queen for the kindness she had shewn him. He appeared at the court, pale and feeble, and could with difficulty support himself.

M. de Maurepas maliciously availed himself of this circumstance to persuade the King that he had been foolishly advised, in engaging to confide a branch of the administration that required most labor and activity, to a man worn out with wounds and constant infirmities.

The King believed him, and mentioned the matter to the Queen with some acrimony ; while that Princess warmly reproached Madame de Polignac for having thus involved her.

Madame de Polignac was mild, but high spirited ; and, wounded by the tone and reproaches of the Queen, she tendered her resignation. The Queen, who was much attached to her, alarmed at the idea of such a separation, appeased her by assurances of her tenderest friendship, heard her explanations, and, being satisfied with them, persisted in her exertions to serve my father.

The King, however, was still irresolute, and this circumstance encouraged the hopes of M. de Maurepas, but M. de Montbarrey himself put an end to this incertitude ; for, justly dissatisfied with the unbecoming part which the ill-timed patronage of Madame de Maurepas obliged him to act, he adopted a very laudable determination, in order to extricate himself from so unpleasant a situation, and at the moment when it was least expected, he entreated the King to accept his resignation.

This proceeding being unknown, no opportunity was afforded to take advantage of it ; but M. de Maurepas, who could not recant after what he had said respecting my father, pointed out, I know not by whose advice, the Count de Puy-ségur as the successor of M. de Montbarrey.

Nothing assuredly could be more honorable than such a choice : M. de Puy-ségur was

a general officer, of distinguished merit, prudent and experienced. He had long been on terms of intimacy with my father. I recollect his coming on this very occasion to see him, when both, little anxious about places, though highly deserving to occupy them, promised to leave the matter to fortune, and to use no kind of interest against each other.

In the meanwhile, Madame de Polignac, being apprized by the Queen, that the King was disposed to decide in favor of M. de Puységur, suggested to that Princess that her interest and dignity were concerned in not permitting the influence of M. de Maurepas to triumph, without any good reasons, over her own.

The Queen, whose self-love was wounded, repaired to the King, and, summoning M. de Maurepas into his presence, reproached that minister with suffering himself to be deceived, or with himself deceiving the King, by representing my father as infirm, and unable, in consequence, of supporting the burthen of office.

She asked him, at the same time, whether he had any other reasonable motive for objecting to the advice she had given him. M. de Maurepas, embarrassed, could give no answer, he even spoke of my father in terms of praise, and the King ordered him to inform M. de Segur that he was appointed minister of war.

Every thing now seemed to presage great events and certain success, since the direction of

affairs was entrusted to men possessing firmness, activity, skill and experience, and who were animated with ardent and sincere zeal for their King and country.

Besides, the greatest harmony prevailed between M. Necker, M. de Castries, M. de Vergennes and my father. One obstacle could alone retard their progress and weaken their efforts, and that was the indolence and levity of M. de Maurepas, who was alarmed at any bold determination.

The sole object of this careless old man was to pass quietly the short time he had yet to live ; and, in order to be free from all agitation and uneasiness, he wished the King to reign only, as it were, from day to day. Averse to all idea of reform that might excite complaints or intrigues, and to every plan of campaign in which great success is only to be purchased at the expense of great risk ; he wished to play the terrible game of war without venturing large stakes, to parade, in short, but not to fight.

His irresolution impeded the deliberations ; trifling intrigues occupied his attention more than the important interests of the state. He jested in treating even the most serious matters, and the sceptre, confided to his hands, seemed to be merely a toy to amuse his old childhood.

His wish was, however, accomplished : his last days were exempt from storms ; and, towards the end of 1781, he died or rather quietly fell



asleep, leaving Louis XVI free from guardianship, and at liberty to adopt firmer and more useful counsels.

The King did not name any other prime minister, and resolved to take the reins of government into his own hands.

A few months before, M. Necker, who administered the finances with great skill, had adopted a measure which by some was considered great and useful, and by others hurtful and dangerous. He caused the account of the state of the finances, as he had presented it to the King, to be printed and published.

This innovation, unexampled in France, produced a kind of revolution in the public mind. Hitherto, the nation, a stranger to its own affairs, had remained most completely ignorant as to the receipt and expenditure of the public revenue, the debts of the state, the extent of its wants and the resources it possessed. All this was for every Frenchman, and even for the better informed classes, the true *arcanum imperii*.

This appeal to public opinion was an appeal to liberty; and, as soon as the nation had satisfied their curiosity, respecting these important objects, which had always been kept concealed from their view, they began to discuss and to judge, to bestow praise and to censure. Their eyes being thus opened on this most essential point connected with their interests, it was not long before they thought or recollected that, in matters of accounts and taxation, they were not to be re-

duced to the sole duty of paying, and that they had a right to examine, to grant, or to refuse the burthens imposed upon them.

This opinion, which was rapidly formed, was observed gradually to gain ground, until the moment when it broke out with unforeseen violence.

The King, M. Necker and the other members of the administration, were far from contemplating that such would be the result of a measure dictated to them by their regard for the public welfare. As their minds only conceived views of general utility, they imagined they had nothing to conceal : virtue, like truth, loves to appear without disguise. How should they, in fact, have apprehended any thing from a nation whose happiness was the only object of their unceasing efforts !

Guided by the same motives and by the same advice, the King abolished the *corvée*, or system of forced labor, and that servitude of the glebe which still offered us the sad remnant of ages of barbarism.

At last, M. Necker, who hoped to found a system of credit, an inexhaustible source of riches, but which can only be established by confidence, conceived the plan of creating provincial administrations throughout the kingdom.

This was the surest method to accustom proprietors to gain a knowledge of public affairs, and take an interest in them. It also delivered us from the inconvenience of an administrative

concentration, a measure which is unjust when it is excessivé, and which is the more fatal as it paralyzes the national will, isolates the government by separating it from the nation, consigns the fate of the *communes* to the caprices of the *bureaux*, and very seldom produces a beneficial result any where, because it seeks to restrain and to direct every thing.

It may be positively affirmed that if this plan, which has been so much attacked, and which was so conformable to the paternal intentions of the King, had triumphed over the obstacles opposed to it by intrigue, instead of imprudently pursuing a chimerical liberty through the violent convulsions of a stormy revolution, this national education would have been gradually acquired, salutary reforms would have been produced by degrees, the throne would have derived from the municipal and provincial deliberations both information and assistance, the government would have become accustomed to consult an enlightened national feeling which would have increased its strength hundred-fold, and true liberty would have become naturalized amongst us without effort, instead of appearing like a hostile power which invaded, upset and levelled every thing, and before which the old powers, the ancient superiorities, the ancient laws and the old customs, were obliged, after a short but obstinate contest, to give way or to perish.

But, since it had been decreed by fate that the plan proposed by the administration and adopted

by the King was not to be followed with firmness, it would, perhaps, have been desirable that the idea of such a plan had never been conceived and brought to light; for, in the same proportion, as such a design was grand, just, useful and popular, did public opinion become irritated against the private interests which thwarted its success; and this was, perhaps, one of the principal causes of those fatal differences which since arose between the plebeian classes and the first orders of the state.

M. Necker had, by simple means, supplied the government with immense resources to bear the expenses of the war not only without the necessity of an increase of taxation, but with the advantage, on the contrary, of a diminution of its burthen; he had filled the public coffers by the sale of annuities, which were to be paid by sums arising from reforms to be introduced by means of sumptuary laws, and economies which were to be effected in the expenditure of the court.

This line of conduct shewed great skill in the management of affairs, but argued little knowledge of mankind. The minister was not aware of the number and power of all the personages, great as well as subaltern, who were interested in the existence of abuses; but he learnt it too soon, at his own expense. Private interests gained the victory over the public weal, the state was sacrificed to the court, economy to luxury, prudence to vanity.

The storm now broke out on all sides; and the

enemies of M. Necker took advantage of a fault into which he had been betrayed by his vanity. Not satisfied with the title of director-general of the finances, he wished to become a minister, to be able the better to defend his plans in the King's council.

The devout appeared scandalized at seeing a protestant hold the helm of state, and the great felt offended at the pretensions of a mere banker of Geneva. All accused him of pride and ambition.

The confidence of the King was shaken by these clamors ; and, as his principal defect consisted in too much diffidence in his own judgment, he fancied he heard the expression of public opinion whilst he was listening to that of the greatest number of the courtiers who surrounded his throne. He, therefore, yielded, in opposition to his own wishes, and M. Necker was removed from the administration, by the same adversaries who had obtained from the King the sacrifice of M. Turgot, and decided the retreat of M. de Malesherbes.

This disgrace, the date of which I have somewhat anticipated, led on by the current of my reflections, only occurred after the military success which the skill of that minister had facilitated. His dismissal was long felt and remembered ; every branch of the administration suffered from it.

However, if the good results that might have been expected from the skill of M. Necker were thus lost, considerable advantage was, for some

time, derived from the sources he had created; and the other ministers, who had vainly taken his defence, made a very beneficial application of the pecuniary means he had left at their disposal.

The campaign of 1781, in which so many seas were covered with our fleets, so many islands fell into our power, and so many brilliant triumphs were achieved by our arms in America and in India, will ever remain a memorable and glorious epoch in the annals of the French monarchy.

The King, through the skill of M. de Vergennes, had succeeded in forming a formidable naval coalition against England. The violence of the English, who had insulted Holland in the Antilles, invaded and laid waste the Islands of Saint-Eustatia, Saint-Martin, and Saba, roused public opinion in the United Provinces, and that republic took up arms to unite her strength to ours, and avenge the affronts we had sustained.

Spain powerfully assisted us, as soon as we held out to her the prospect of regaining possession of the Balearics\*, Gibraltar, Florida and Jamaica. The neutrality of the remainder of Europe, at all times difficult to obtain, was secured, and the plan formed by the northern powers for obliging British pride to respect the neutral flag, and the liberty of the seas, even inspired us with some hope that, if the war were of long duration, these powers might, hereafter, be induced to take an active part in it with us.

Every political and financial obstacle being thus

\* Or Balearic islands, viz., Majorca, Minorca, and Ivica.

removed by M. de Vergennes and M. Necker, nothing remained to be done by the ministers of war, and of the navy but to triumph, by their united combinations, and their activity, over the other difficulties opposed to us, arising from the faults already committed by their predecessors, and the immense resources of the power we had to engage.

The situation of our affairs every where presented an alarming aspect. We have already spoken of the distressed condition of the American armies in the north and in the south, and of the awkward position in which M. de Rochambeau was placed at the head of troops not sufficiently numerous, and constantly blockaded in New-Port.

The unexpected return of Count de Guichen to France left the Antilles at the mercy of the English, who had already taken possession of the Dutch islands, as well as of the colonies of Surinam, Ticonderago, and Demerara.

Admiral Rodney ranged the sea without a rival. The intrepid Lamotte-Piquet, commanding a small squadron, alone proved to him that the French flag was still in existence. This brave officer, by a fortunate and sudden attack, succeeded in capturing a convoy, bearing part of the treasures wrested from the Dutch by British avidity.

Spain was uselessly consuming great forces by sea and land, in the siege of Gibraltar, an impregnable fortress, and of which she might have obtained the restitution by co-operating with us in the adoption of more efficacious measures for

attacking the coasts of England, and destroying her naval power.

India, abandoned by us, was entirely falling into the power of the English, who skilfully followed, in that part of the world, the plans uselessly pointed out to us by the prudent and daring genius of Dupleix, and by La Bourdonnaye. Hyder-Ali, left without assistance, was desperately, but unsuccessfully, defending his independence.

Such was, then, the melancholy picture of our military situation in the two hemispheres. But the activity of the efforts of the new ministers, the justness of their combinations, the wisdom of their plans, the precision of their instructions, and the intimate harmony that subsisted between them, together with the intrepidity of the chiefs, and the courage of the troops charged with the execution of their orders, changed, in the space of a few months, our fears into hopes, and our reverses into triumphs.

From the coasts of America to those of Africa, and to the shores of India, glory accompanied our arms. We liberated America, restored the Dutch colonies, conquered several English colonies, as well as Florida, and the Baleares islands, which were restored to Spain, afforded assistance, to Hyder-Ali, and regained possession of our territories in India. Suffren immortalized his name, and the fame of our arms.

The British administration, disheartened by our success, suffered the reins of government to es-



cape from its hands, and to pass into those of a victorious opposition. The commanders of the English forces, compelled to act on the defensive, shut themselves up in the fortresses of Charlestown and New-York, and, two years afterwards, in spite of a great naval victory gained over us by the fortune of Rodney, the British government, abandoning all hope of again bringing America under its dominion, and, seeing that we were on the point of taking the remainder of its possessions in the Antilles, was reduced to acknowledge, in 1783, the independence of the United States, and to sign, with its enemies, the most glorious peace that had been, for a long time, concluded by a King of France.

Such were the fortunate results of a war which had begun so unfortunately, results which shed a lustre over the reign of Louis XVI, and which must justly perpetuate the memory of the ministers who were honored by the confidence of that virtuous monarch.

But it is not enough thus to trace, in a few lines, a rapid sketch of those brilliant achievements ; I think it necessary to say, also, a few words respecting the means that were adopted to obtain this glorious result.

The principal object of the King's ministers was to secure the independence of the United States, and to deprive England of the possession of those thirteen rich provinces of America ; and we have already said, that the instructions given to Count de Grasse were, that he should co-operate

with his naval forces, and troops taken in the Antilles in any expedition which the combined armies of Washington and Rochambeau might undertake, either in the north or in the south of America. These instructions, the perfect harmony that subsisted between the two generals, the skill which dictated the final plan they agreed upon, and the rapidity which attended its execution, all combined to determine and fix fortune in our favor.

It was a vast and noble idea to raise the blocus of Rhode-Island, to deceive Clinton, and keep him thus shut up in New-York, to keep Cornwallis in Virginia, by deceiving him in the same manner, and to send, in sufficient time, a large fleet from the port of Brest, and afterwards from the Antilles, to the bay of Chesapeake, in order to leave Cornwallis no hope of retreat or embarkation, at the precise moment when the combined forces of Washington, Rochambeau, and La Fayette, should attack and force him in his last entrenchments. But the success of this vast plan could only be ensured by an admirable concurrence of combinations, rapidity, and even fortunate chances; for, in an operation of that nature, planned at such a distance from the scene of action, and the execution of which was to be effected on so many different points, all the calculations of prudence, and all the efforts of courage, might have been easily defeated by the caprice of fate, and the inconstancy of winds.

In short, if this vast plan, which decided the fate of the war, could only have been conceived

by men of superior talent, it required no less to conduct it to a favorable issue than the enterprising spirit of the Count de Grasse, and the consummate skill of Washington, aided by the activity of Barras, the valor of La Fayette, the wisdom and experience of Count Rochambeau, the heroic intrepidity of our troops and sailors, and the bravery of the American militia, who fought, in that campaign, like old soldiers.

Whilst forty thousand men, stationed on our coasts, and the French and Spanish fleets cruising in the British Channel, occasioned the liveliest alarms in England, and obliged the English Government to concentrate its naval forces, in order to defend its own territory, the Count de Grasse, who had sailed from Brest with twenty-one ships, provided with troops of disembarcation, abundant supplies, and able instructions, soon arrived in sight of Martinique.

Admiral Hood was waiting for him on his passage, and, although that admiral had not been able to collect more than seventeen men of war, he courageously attacked the French fleet, in the hope of capturing the convoy that followed it; but his efforts were unavailing; he was repulsed with loss, and the whole of our convoy reached the port in safety.

M. de Bouillé and M. de Blanchelande rapidly took possession of the Island of Tobago. Rodney vainly endeavored to defend it; he was forced to retreat, and brought back his ships to England, the greatest number of them considerably damaged.

M. de Grasse, having thus made himself master of the sea, and having embarked in his fleet a corps of three thousand men, commanded by the Marquis de Saint-Simon, set sail for the United States, and entered the bay of Chesapeak without opposition.

The northern French army, in pursuance of the resolutions adopted in the conference of Wethersfield, had quitted Newport, advanced to the banks of Hudson's river, and had thus rejoined the American army. A strong detachment under the command of M. de Choisy, had been left in Rhode-Island, where the French fleet also remained.

M. de Barras the admiral, by whom that fleet was commanded, proved, on this occasion, that the interest of his country was dearer to him than the interest of his ambition. In a council of war held at Newport, he declared, that although he was a senior officer to the Count de Grasse, lately appointed lieutenant-general, as soon as the latter should appear with his army within sight of the coasts, he should set sail and place himself under his orders ; but that, the campaign over, he should not go through another, being unwilling to find himself again in a situation so unpleasant to his feelings.

Washington and Rochambeau having united their forces, learnt that General Green had gained some advantages over Lord Rawdon, but that Lord Cornwallis, at the head of eight thousand men, was closely pursuing General La Fayette, who had no other resource than to retire from

river to river, to go and join General Vaine, who was advancing towards him with the Pensylvanian line. This intelligence confirmed the propriety of the plan of Count de Rochambeau, who had constantly given the preference to an expedition in the south, over the operation already commenced against New York.

The combined armies established their camps at Philipsburg, three leagues from Kingsbridge, which was the first post of the English in York Island. This movement produced a very favorable result, for Clinton had received instructions from London, to embark and make a descent on the coasts of Pennsylvania; but the approach of the American and French armies, by preventing him from carrying these instructions into effect, kept him at New-York.

Lord Cornwallis, in the south, uneasy at not hearing from Clinton, and having been unable to succeed in preventing the junction of La Fayette with the Pensylvanian line, fell back upon Richmond, by James's river, and from thence upon Williamsburgh, four miles from York-town.

General Washington in the mean time continued his demonstrations of attack against New York. General Lincoln, and the Chevalier de Chastellux, at the head of five thousand men, dispersed several corps of Torys and protected a reconnaissance which Washington and Rochambeau made of all the works of New York. A long and brisk cannonade from the English, produced little effect. In the course of that reconnaissance, a

few shots were exchanged by the respective posts, and the Count Charles de Dumas, now first Gentleman of the Chamber, had a horse killed under him.

After this operation, the American and French generals received important intelligence. La Fayette informed Washington, that Lord Cornwallis continued his retreat, constantly harrassed by the American van-guard, and that, after having stopped a short time at Plymouth, the English general had established himself at York and Gloucester, with the apparent intention of embarking from there as soon as the arrival of an English fleet should furnish him with the means of so doing.

At the same time, three thousand English recruits were seen to arrive at New York. M. de Rochambeau also received on the 5th of August, a letter from the Count de Grasse, who wrote to him from Martinique, that he should be in the bay of Chesapeak at the end of the month, but that he should not be able to remain there beyond the 15th of October. This concurrence of circumstances irrevocably decided in favor of the southern expedition.

M. de Barras, who was to have effected his junction with M. de Grasse, received orders to take on board his fleet the siege artillery, and the detachment of M. de Choisy, and transport them to Chesapeak.

On the 19th of August, the French and American armies made a retrograde movement,

marched up the Hudson river, and crossed it at King's-ferry. Washington left three thousand men under General Heats on the left bank of the river, to defend west-point and the northern states.

However, in order to continue to deceive Clinton, a show of transporting supplies to Staten-island was made, as if an attack were projected against New York on that side, whilst the two armies continuing their march, crossed the Delaware, passed through Pennsylvania, and defiled before the eyes of the Congress.

Intelligence was then obtained, that Admiral Hood, having arrived off New York, had joined Admiral Graves, and was sailing towards the bay of Chesapeake. Fortunately, information was also received at the same moment, that the Count de Grasse had got the start of him, and had entered the bay with twenty-six ships of the line.

Generals Washington and Rochambeau, accelerating the march of their troops, went on before them, and arrived on the 14th September, at Williamsbourg, where they found the divisions of La Fayette and Saint-Simon, waiting for them intrenched in a strong position.

On his side Lord Cornwallis had entrenched himself at Gloucester and York; he had secured the entrance of York river, by stationing ships across it, and sinking others, fate having now deprived him of all hope of embarkation and escape from the formidable forces which were advancing to attack him.

On the 14th, the English fleet, consisting of twenty sail, appeared off Cape Charles; M. de Grasse sailed with twenty-four ships to attack it, and his van-guard, commanded by M. de Bougainville, engaged the combat. After a resistance of some hours, the French gained a complete victory; the English admiral fled, and was under the necessity of setting fire to one of his ships; four others were dismasted.

During this action, M. de Barras had entered the bay with his squadron, landed the siege artillery, and the detachment of Choisy, and captured two English frigates. M. de Grasse sent several ships to Annapolis, from whence they conveyed to Jamestown some French troops, commanded by M. de Vioménil.

The whole of the combined forces being thus united, York was invested by the French without the loss of a single man. On the 29th the American army having crossed some marshes, supported its left against them, extending its right as far as York river, by which means the place was completely surrounded. The corps of Lauzun and some American militia, stationed themselves on the road to Gloucester. Cornwallis leaving his camp of Pigeons-Isle, shut himself up within the intrenchments of the town of York. M. de Lauzun, supported by some American militia, made a brisk attack against the dragoons of Tarleton, who were obliged to retire within the town, and M. de Choisy pushed his advanced posts as far as one mile from Gloucester.



Affairs were in this state, when information was received that Arnold, having been obliged to abandon the south, had been sent to Connecticut ; and that abandonning that province, in which he was born, to the most horrible devastations, he had burned New-London, pierced with his sword the brave Colonel Lidger, who was in the act of presenting him his to surrender, massacred the garrison of a fort he had taken, and set fire to all the merchant vessels that were in the port.

This traitor deserved, by his atrocities, the contempt and hatred with which he inspired his countrymen. It is related, that being in Virginia, and closely pursued, he asked an American soldier, who was one of his prisoners what his countrymen would have done with him if they had taken him. “ We should have separated “ from your body, your leg wounded in the service “ of your country,” answered the soldier, “ and “ should have hanged the remainder.

Clinton had in vain hoped that the news of this diversion would arrest the march of the allied troops ; and Admiral Digby with three ships of war, land troops and the Prince William-Henry, son of the King of England, who was appointed governor of Virginia by his father, having arrived at the same time at New-York, he prepared to embark and conceived the design of coming with his army and twenty-six ships of war to the assistance of Cornwallis ; but it will be seen that it was then too late.

York-town, almost entirely covered by a marsh,

was moreover protected by intrenchments and palisades defended by a hornwork and two redoubts, in advance of which were numerous abatis.

This memorable siege commenced at the beginning of October ; the American forces amounted to about nine thousand men, and the French to seven thousand. The trenches were opened during the night from the 6th to the 7th October, both above and below York river.

The works of the siege were directed by the engineers du Portail and de Queneret, and the French and American artillery, by M. d'Aboville and General Knox. The army of Washington defended the trenches to the right, and that of Rochambeau the left and the centre. Their batteries set fire to a British man of war and three transports, which had anchored with a view to attack the reverse of the trenches.

The attack of the redoubts was ordered a few days afterwards, and nothing could exceed the noble ardor, the valor and discipline, displayed by the two armies on this occasion, and the intimate harmony entirely free from jealousy that prevailed between them.

The Americans were led to the assault by generals La Fayette, Lincoln, Lawrens and Hamilton ; the French advanced under the orders of Baron Vioménil and Marquis de Saint-Simon.

In this affair fresh laurels were gathered by the Duke de Lauzun, who had just achieved the conquest of Senegal, by Viscount de Noailles and by Dillon, already mentioned in the affair of

Grenada, by Count Charles de Lameth who, in this brilliant action, received two severe and glorious wounds at the very moment when the first he ascended the ramparts of the English redoubt. Returned to France, Count de Lameth distinguished himself some years afterwards in the *tribune* by his oratorical powers, and in the war of Spain, by his noble defense of Saint-Ogna.

The Colonels Count de Deux-Ponts, du Muy, de Custines, entitled themselves to the most honorable encomiums. The Marquis de Saint-Simon, already ill at that period, forgetting his sufferings and listening only to the suggestions of his courage caused himself to be carried at the head of the columns. Count Guillaume de Deux-Ponts was wounded.

Mention must also be made of the names of other brave officers whom fortune has since placed in such various circumstances; of the Duke de Castries, now a peer of France, of Mathieu Dumas, the memory of whose fame will be long preserved in the annals of eloquence, history and war; of Alexander Berthier, who, at a later period became the Hephæstion of another Alexander; and the son of the French general Viscount de Rochambeau, who perished in another field of battle.

In the same ranks were also to be seen Count Charles de Damas, now a peer and first gentleman of the chamber, Lieutenant Colonel Anselme, who afterwards conquered Nice, and Miollis, who, having become a general, conciliated the affection of the nations conquered in our late wars.

The two redoubts were carried almost at the same moment by the columns of M. de Vioménil and M. de La Fayette. The greatest number of those by whom they were defended were killed or taken.

The generals made a lodgment by joining the two redoubts together by a communication to the right of the second parallel. Here fresh batteries were placed which battered the whole of the interior of the town by ricochet shots.

In the night from the 15th to the 16th, the English made a sortie with six hundred chosen men, and having in vain endeavored to overcome the resistance of the troops who defended the redoubts, they seized upon a battery of the second parallel and spiked four of its guns. But the Chevalier de Chastellux, having advanced at the head of a reserve, repulsed the assailants and obliged them to retire in disorder. The next day the Marquis de Saint-Simon was wounded in the trench, but would not abandon his post.

Cornwallis made another effort to pass the river and escape; but a storm dispersed part of his boats, and General Choisy obliged the English to enter the town again.

On the 17th, the English began to parley. Viscount de Noailles, Colonel Lawrens and M. de Granchain were appointed to settle the conditions of the capitulation with the superior officers of the English army, and that capitulation was signed on the 19th October, by General Washington, Count de Rochambeau and M. de Barras, on behalf of the Count de Grasse.

Eight thousand prisoners, two hundred and

fourteen pieces of canon and twenty-two flags were taken on this occasion. The English troops defiled between the two allied armies, drums beating and carrying their arms which they afterwards deposited with their flags.

As Lord Cornwallis was ill, General O'Hara defiled at the head of the English troops and presented his sword to Count de Rochambeau; but the French general pointing to Washington at the head of the American army, told him that the French being only auxiliaries, it was for the American general to receive his sword and give him his orders. The Duke de Lauzun and the Count Guillaume de Deux-Ponts were selected by M. de Rochambeau to be the bearers of this capitulation to France.

On the 27th October, the English fleet, consisting of twenty-seven sail appeared at the entrance of the bay. General Clinton was on board with his army, but finding that his assistance was now useless he put to sea again.

On the 4th November, the Count de Grasse sailed with the French fleet for the Antilles, taking with him M. de Saint-Simon and the troops under his command. General Washington proceeded again to Hudson river, and the French remained some time in winter quarters at York, Gloucester and Williamsbourg.

The absence of our naval army had not slackened the activity of M. de Bouillé, who taking advantage of the removal of the English forces to another quarter, employed very successfully

the small number of inferior vessels which had been left at his disposal.

He formed the plan of recapturing the Dutch islands, which, seconded by fortune, he executed with rapidity. Having, during the night, landed his troops in the island of Saint-Eustatia, he advanced at break of day to attack the principal fortresses of the island, whose garrison was then engaged in manœuvring in the plain. The van-guard of M. de Bouillé, was composed of an Irish regiment in the service of France; deceived by the sight of their red coats, the English thought they saw a party of their own countrymen and suffered themselves to be approached without suspicion. Undeceived too late, they vainly fought with courage, they were routed on all sides, and pursued with so much ardor, that French and English entered pell-mell into the fortress which remained in our possession. This conquest was quickly followed by the capture of the small islands of Saint-Martin and Saba, and at the same time Count de Kersaint took possession of the important colonies of Surinam, Demerara and Essequibo.

As soon as M. de Grasse reappeared in the Antilles, he took with M. de Bouillé the resolution of attacking the Island of Saint-Christopher, and in pursuance with this determination set sail for that island where he landed M. de Bouillé, who, invested with all his troops the fortress of Brimstone-Hill. But, at this moment, the indefatigable Admiral Hood, whom no reverse could discourage, appeared with twenty-two ships of the line,

and offered battle to M. de Grasse. The French admiral quickly sailed out of the harbour and advanced in the hope of obtaining a fresh triumph, but the skilful Hood retired before him with the appearance of alarm, and suddenly, by an able manœuvre turning the French fleet, entered without obstacle, the harbour we had just left, where having anchored and being protected by two forts, he quietly braved our efforts. M. de Grasse attacked him twice with intrepidity, but in vain, he could not succeed in breaking the English line, and having no fire ships he had no means of destroying it.

After this failure, M. de Grasse was obliged to retire. M. de Bouillé, however, abandoned to his own resources, and deprived of the assistance of our ships, did not lose courage; leaving part of his troops before the fortress, he advanced with the remainder to meet fifteen hundred English, which Admiral Hood had landed. At the first shock he routed and destroyed them, and having returned to his lines, he carried on the siege, obliged the garrison to capitulate, and remained master of the whole island. Admiral Hood having thus no hope of being able to recapture this colony, was obliged to retire from a harbour which he had so courageously defended.

Fortune seemed to have declared in our favor, but we experienced hereafter, by a great reverse, the fatal consequences of the fault M. de Grasse committed on this occasion by neglecting the opportunity of destroying this English fleet

without which Rodney could never have gained the disastrous victory reserved to him by fate.

This year terminated gloriously for us and our allies. Barras took possession of the island of Montferrat; Admiral don Solano and general don Galvez, conquered Florida and made themselves masters of Pensacola; the French and Spaniards united, attacked the Baleares. The English general Murray courageously defended Minorca and fort Saint-Philippe; our fleet was commanded by Guichen, Beausset, and Lamotte-Piquet, and that of the Spaniards by don Louis de Cordova.

The Duke de Crillon worthy of his name was the commander in chief of this expedition; when he summoned Murray to surrender, the latter rejected his proposal, and replied to him that he was determined to act as the brave Crillon, an ancestor of his adversary, had done when a step was dictated to him incompatible with honor. The valor displayed by the besiegers and the besieged, rendered this siege memorable; Murray did not yield until he had exhausted all his ammunition and obtained an honorable capitulation.

It was also at this period that the Dutch fought the famous battle of Doggersbank, in the North Sea, against the English, and disputed the victory with so much courage that it remained undecided. This was the last success obtained by the expiring vigor of the Dutch navy, and of that republic which once poor and oppressed, had at first conquered its independence, and afterwards fought England and France with equality of success, but



which having obtained opulence, fell through indolence to the rank of a power of the third class. Formerly the flag ship of Europe, she only appeared after this like a frail boat, submissively obedient by terms to the signals of the two great maritime powers.

This rapid sketch of the glorious events of this campaign of 1781, will no doubt be sufficient to justify the praises bestowed on all sides on the ministers of Louis XVI; and, notwithstanding the check which, owing to the caprice of winds, or to the faults committed by the Count de Grasse, we received the following year, the discouragement of the English, the little advantage they derived from their victory, and the glorious peace we compelled them to sign, prove quite enough how destitute of foundation are the reproaches which a modern historian addresses to the ministry on the subject. This writer pretends that, after the removal of M. Necker, the ministers were quite disunited, the councils less frequent, the action of the government slow, its plans concerted with less skill, and that the nation, tired of the war, expressed no joy at the birth of a Dauphin, and received with indifference the news of the capitulation of Cornwallis.

It is certain on the contrary that, at the period of the birth of the Dauphin, the whole nation manifested their affection for the King and Queen by the liveliest and most sincere demonstrations. The generals who arrived in France after the capture of York, cannot have forgotten the universal ho-

mage paid to them, and the noble pride with which France was inspired by their triumphs.

All those who lived at that time must still recollect the enthusiasm excited by the return of La Fayette, enthusiasm which was shared by the Queen herself. He reached Paris during the celebration of a grand *fête*, at the *hôtel de ville*, on the occasion of the birth of the heir to the throne, and madame de La Fayette who was there, received a most signal mark of royal favor ; for as soon as the arrival of the young conqueror of Cornwallis became known, the Queen insisted upon conducting her in person and in her own carriage to the mansion of the Duke de Noailles where her husband had just alighted.

It must however be admitted that, in the midst of this public joy, the deep regret inspired by the removal of M. Necker was not concealed ; his disgrace at court had redoubled the popular favor of which he was the object.

M. de Castries and my father, who were the friends of this minister, shared in this general feeling of regret ; they deplored the loss of a colleague virtuous, skilful, and fertile in resources ; but they remained constantly united with M. de Vergennes. The same harmony and the same activity presided over their operations ; the plans they formed were as vast as those of the last campaign, and combined with as much ability and grandeur of conception ; and if they were not crowned with the same fortunate results, it would be extremely unjust, as will hereafter be seen, to

ascribe this want of success to other causes than to the fault of the admiral entrusted with their execution.

His forces, equal to those of the English, were to join the naval army of don Solano, at Saint-Domingo, where our already numerous troops were to receive a reinforcement of sixteen thousand Spaniards. Our naval superiority was thus incontestable, the infallible results of which would have been the conquest of Jamaica, and the total ruin of the English in the Antilles.

This combination, which was as vast in its conception as that which had lately led to the junction of our fleet and troops, with the armies of Rochambeau, Washington, and La Fayette, evidently offered less doubtful chances of success. Nothing was wanting on the part of ministers, fortune alone proved inconstant to a general who had hitherto displayed a degree of skill calculated to secure her favor. A simple narrative of the events that occurred will prove better than any reflections the truth of this assertion.

M. de Grasse, having under his command thirty-three line of battle ships and numerous troops, received from ministers instructions to proceed to Saint-Domingo, where he would find the naval army of Spain, amounting to sixteen thousand men. These combined forces were to effect, without delay, a descent in Jamaica.

Admiral Rodney, with thirty-five sail, endeavored to oppose this junction, and met the French fleet near Dominica on the 9th of April

1782; that fleet was followed by a numerous convoy towards which the English admiral speedily advanced in the hope of capturing it; but, after a sharp contest, his van-guard was repulsed, with loss, by the French van-guard.

M. de Grasse having thus saved his convoy, continued his course, followed by Rodney, who could not succeed in arresting his progress. He was already near Guadaloupe, out of the enemy's reach, and the junction was certain, when a grave error defeated all these plans and prospects.

On the 12th of April, a French vessel, the *Zélé*, having, by a false manœuvre, come athwart our flag ship, the *Ville-de-Paris*, was unrigged, and, being unable to hold the wind, drifted into the waters of the English fleet. M. de Grasse, prompted by a courage too impetuous, and by the fear of losing a ship, forgot, for a moment, that nothing should have diverted his attention from the principal object he had to fulfil, which was his junction with the Spanish army; he advanced towards the English, and succeeded in extricating the *Zélé*. But, from that moment, an action was rendered inevitable and speedily commenced. M. de Grasse was stationed in the centre of the line, our van-guard was commanded by M. de Vaudreuil, our rear by Bougainville. Never had the sea been the theatre of a more important conflict between forces of greater magnitude! The sceptre of the ocean, contended for by England and France, was the prize offered to the victor.

The battle was long and terrible : on both sides equal courage was directed by equal skill ; during the greater part of the day Rodney tried in vain to force our line ; fortune already seemed to declare in our favor, when suddenly the wind changed. The French van-guard was then near the coasts of an island, the heights and capes of which sheltered it from this wind, and, being thus in calm water, was unable to continue its manœuvres and to obey the signals made by the admiral.

Rodney, immediately availing himself of this circumstance, broke through our line and threw it into confusion. Each of our ships had then to contend against several of the enemy ; in vain did the obstinate courage of our sailors struggle against superiority of numbers and against fate ; two of our ships sunk, and others totally dismasted and vainly towed by frigates, fell into the hands of the enemy. The deck of the *Ville-de-Paris*, exposed during several hours to the fire of three English ships, was rased like a pontoon ; of all its company, the admiral alone and two officers, were without wounds ; at last, unable to resist any longer, M. de Grasse surrendered.

By this defeat we lost eight of our ships, which were taken by the English ; their loss in killed amounted to one thousand men, and ours to three thousand. Their fleet, though victorious, had been so roughly treated, that it was unable, after the engagement, to attempt any conquest,

or to undertake any important operation, and even to oppose the retreat of the Count de Vaudreuil, who brought back into our ports a naval army, still consisting of twenty-five men of war.

This reverse did not, however, prevent us and our allies from continuing to act on the offensive. The illustrious La Peyrouse proceeded to Hudson's bay, and levied large contributions in that quarter. In the south of the United States the English were obliged to evacuate Savannah, and remained timidly shut up within the walls of Charlestown and New York. We generously restored to the Dutch all the riches wrested from them by the cupidity of Rodney, and which we had since captured from him.

Our ministers, far from being discouraged, redoubled the activity of their preparations, formed other combinations to insure the conquest of Jamaica, and resolved to send reinforcements to the army of Rochambeau, which was either to take New York, or embark to join the Spanish army, in order to oblige England, by the fear of losing the remainder of her possessions in the Antilles, to conclude a peace, and acknowledge the independence of America.

However, although the defeat of M. de Grasse was not productive of any other loss to us, it had the fatal result of depriving us of that naval superiority which we had been on the point of wresting from our eternal rival.

On this occasion the English nation proved that they had formed a juster estimate of facts

than the French : at Paris the beaten admiral was the object of epigrams, satires and the most violent abuse : at London his misfortune was pitied, his heroic courage admired, and, either from a sense of justice, or a feeling of pride, he was rendered the object of homages, which were probably exaggerated.

France, however, so far from accusing the ministers of this disaster, hastened to second their efforts. The capital offered the King a three decker, several other towns followed this example, and innumerable subscriptions contributed to supply the means of quickly repairing our losses and carrying on the war with vigor.

Whilst France was exulting in the glory acquired by her arms, in the spectacle of an English army passing under the yoke like the Romans at Caudium, in the equally important and numerous conquests she had made in the Antilles, in the reduction of Senegal and Minorca, in a word, whilst these brilliant achievements maintained her in the first rank of European powers, public opinion, agitated at home, and irritated by the occurrence of great faults in the internal administration, already announced by murmurs, libels and songs, the approach of a great explosion, and a desperate struggle between the old established social order and a new one then seeking to usurp its place, between prejudices and principles, between power and liberty.

Such is the strange inconsistency of the human mind ; the rulers of a monarchy were arming

against a King in favor of two republics ; and supporting, by the most violent efforts, the cause of a people in a state of insurrection. All the youth of the nation were excited by them to consider as objects worthy of their admiration, such republicans as Franklin, Washington, John Adams, Gates and Green. Our flag guided the flag of independence to victory, and all our young courtiers, the future pillars of the old aristocracy, flew to the coasts of America, to imbibe principles of equality, a contempt for all privileges, and a hatred against every kind of despotism, either ministerial or sacerdotal.

The court, at the same time, by a singular contradiction, uneasy at the spirit of opposition which was manifesting itself, forbade all mention, in every public journal, of the name of M. Necker, whose adversaries were openly insulted by the people, whilst his partisans were extolled to the skies. The Bailli Durollet, the author of the opera of *Iphigenia*, was exposed to the greatest affronts in the saloon of the theatre, for having spoken disrespectfully of the disgraced minister. At all the theatres, every word or sentence that could apply as an illusion to arbitrary power and unjust banishments, was eagerly and, as it were, with fury, caught up by the public.

*L'Histoire Philosophique* of Abbé Raynal was then the object of a general enthusiasm. The merit of this important work was not alone the cause of this admiration, it was excited also by those most violent declamations against priests,



against monarchical power and against the state of slavery of the negro race, which its pages contained. The author did not confine himself to the eloquent expression of the indignation due to so unjust an oppression, to a traffic so contrary to religion and humanity; he, as it were, provoked those unfortunate negroes to seek that vengeance which afterwards burst forth so generally, and in so cruel a manner.

The proper course would have been to take advantage of his advice and to refute his errors; but it was clearly wrong to proscribe a book that was to be found in every library, and to which proscription gave an additional value in public estimation. The attorney general, M. de Séguier, issued a most virulent protest against the work, a warrant was obtained to arrest the author, the book was condemned to be burnt, and this condemnation became for Abbé Raynal a sort of apotheosis.

At the same period, a work of one of our best historians, Abbé Millot, a member of the French academy, was condemned by the Inquisition in Spain. The celebrated Olavides, who had just cultivated and civilized the province of Sierra Morena, was thrown into the prisons of that savage tribunal for having translated the work of Raynal into Spanish. I recollect hearing him say, after he had escaped from his dungeon, that one of the most intolerable afflictions of his captivity, had been to be obliged to undergo the penance to which he had been condemned, of reading

night and morning the works of Frère Louis de Grenade, and of another monk equally stupid ; to which I replied to him : “ That is the punishment of the ancients revived ; you have been “ *damnatus ad bestias*.”

No services rendered, no rank, no authority formed a sufficient protection against this monkish tyranny. Admiral Solano, himself, the conqueror of Florida, was doomed to experience it : a copy of Raynal’s work being found in his possession, the almoner of his ship indignantly threw the book into the sea, threatened the admiral with a sentence from the Inquisition, and obliged him to expiate his fault by a public penance. More palpable contradictions could not well be fallen into than were thus exhibited by a line of conduct which rendered the people more sensibly alive to the existence of arbitrary power, at the very moment when its energies were called into action in defence of another nation which had just shaken off its yoke.

Although young at that period, and of course carried along by the spirit of the times, the vortex did not altogether render me blind to the singularity of our inconsistent conduct ; I never can forget with what astonishment I heard at the theatre of the palace of Versailles, the whole court enthusiastically applauding *Brutus*, a tragedy of Voltaire, and especially these two lines :

Je suis fils de Brutus, et je porte en mon cœur,  
La liberté gravée et les rois en horreur.

When the first classes of a monarchy carry to such an extent their fanaticism for the most violent republican maxims, a revolution can neither be very distant nor unforeseen ; those, however, who are, at the present day, the staunchest enemies of every kind of liberty, and the most zealous advocates of the old social order, have entirely forgotten how much they had contributed to drive the people into a course from which it was soon no longer possible to recal them.

Those inconsiderate measures had not the unanimous assent of the King's council ; the keeper of the seals and the minister of Paris were the only advisers of such ill-timed severity ; injudiciously struggling against public opinion, they, by means of ordinances and decrees, combated the cause of liberty which the government was supporting by force of arms ; and, resembling those *torreadores*, who, at the sanguinary entertainments given in Spain, goad, for a long time, by slight wounds, the animal whose anger is thus converted into rage, they imprudently inflamed the public opinion, instead of softening and enlightening it.

The ministers of war and of the marine lamented these errors without sharing in them, and with no less wisdom than activity, gave all their attention to a faithful discharge of the duties of their respective stations. Our navy, beaten and annihilated in the fatal seven years' war, suddenly appeared again, in the presence of a world amazed at its numbers, strength, science,

and discipline. The giant, Albion, was struck with astonishment and dismay at unexpectedly beholding this powerful rival, proudly preparing to dispute with it the dominion of the seas.

M. De Castries, skilful in combining his plans, active in their execution, firm in his resolutions, inaccessible to the manœuvres of intrigue, and endowed with remarkable discernment, opposed with equal courage the enemies of France and the intrigues of the court. To him must, in a great measure, be ascribed the success of the campaign of 1781, and the brilliancy of that last ray of glory which it shed over the reign of the unfortunate Louis XVI. He was cordially seconded by my father. Both united by the most intimate ties of friendship, were animated with the same spirit of order and justice, and with the same anxiety for the public welfare. Indifferent to the claims of favor, their duty was their sole guide; and their ambition consisted in conscientiously serving their monarch, heedless of pleasing those who considered his interests as secondary to their own.

As the military career was at that time, whether owing to habit or to prejudice, the only one adopted by the French nobility, the minister of war was more than any of his colleagues incessantly assailed by manœuvres, intrigues, the importunate application of the higher classes, and the caprices of favor. Each prince was desirous of accelerating the promotion of those who were attached to his person; each of the great officers of state endeavored with the utmost eagerness

to forward the advancement of his relatives and dependants.

The Queen herself, whose innate goodness could seldom resist the pleasure of granting favors, was constantly assailing the firmness of the minister who wished to maintain the existing regulations. She sometimes reproached my father with a want of complaisance and gratitude towards her, and vexed at his refusals, she on one or two occasions availed herself of the influence which she derived from the King's affection for her, to force him into compliance with her wishes.

The brother of a man holding one of the highest dignities at court, whose weak and wavering conduct had exposed him to almost universal censure, and against whom public opinion had even raised much heavier accusations, at the time he was commanding a detachment during the war of Corsica, was applying for the situation of inspector-general, which was considered one of very great importance.

My father was, very properly, desirous of bestowing it upon one of the general officers of the longest standing and highest estimation in the service ; but the Queen, who protected this candidate, prevailed upon the King to require that my father should make this unjust nomination. He obeyed, but tendered at the same time his resignation to the King, who refused to accept it, and when the new inspector came, according to custom, to return thanks to the minister, the latter replied, " that he owed him no obligation, since,

“ on the contrary, he had used his utmost exertions to prevent the grant of a favor so ill-bestowed, and that he was indebted to the Queen alone for this preference.”

The displeasure of this Princess was unbounded ; she desired me to wait upon her, and detailed at great length, and with warmth, the many causes of discontent which my father gave her. I took this opportunity of representing to her Majesty how unfortunate it was that princes should thus suffer themselves to be deceived and irritated by those who surrounded them, and whose constant endeavors had for object to induce them to sacrifice the public welfare to private interest. “ My father can never forget, “ Madam,” I continued, “ that he is indebted to “ your Majesty for his elevation ; but he conceives that he cannot give you a better proof “ of his gratitude, than by faithfully and conscientiously serving the King. You have an “ army to defend you, and not to obey your pleasure. This army will lose every kind of emulation, if, as heretofore, interest should continue to have the ascendancy over merit, and “ birth over services. Your Majesty has witnessed “ the deplorable condition to which this army “ was lately reduced, by the complaisance and “ weakness of a minister, against whose conduct the public opinion has been so loudly expressed. All the great personages of your “ court wanted to obtain some command ; there “ was not a bishop that did not aspire to direct

“ the appointment of some colonel, not a pretty  
“ woman or an abbé that did not pretend to  
“ bestow some captain’s commission. Those  
“ abuses are now at an end; order has reappeared;  
“ hope is reviving, and you may perceive the  
“ happy effects of this change in the ardor displayed by our troops, and the success which has  
“ crowned their efforts in both hemispheres. Would  
“ your Majesty permit so great a blessing to be  
“ but illusory and of short duration ?”

“ But,” replied the Queen, “ I am not asking  
“ for what is unjust ; I only think it not unfair to  
“ obtain a preference for military men whose  
“ services are meritorious, and whose name and  
“ attachment give them a claim to some consideration. Your father has none for me ; he  
“ wishes to deprive me of every means of conferring favors ; his punctilious regulations, which  
“ he is incessantly opposing to my demands, give  
“ him a character of pedantry and harshness ;  
“ he is as unbending as an iron rod ; the attachment of the King and Queen are not adequate  
“ titles in his eyes. When I caused him to be  
“ appointed minister, I little expected that he  
“ would incessantly thwart my views, and deprive  
“ me of the satisfaction which is dearest to my  
“ heart, that of doing good, and of rendering  
“ service to those whose attachment has given  
“ them a claim upon our favor.”

“ But, Madam,” I rejoined, “ your Majesty has  
“ too much penetration not to feel that, on every  
“ occasion when my father is compelled to resist

“ your wishes, he inflicts a severe disappointment  
“ upon himself; allow me besides to observe that  
“ you are unacquainted with the barren details of  
“ military administration ; it would be extremely  
“ irksome to you to make yourself acquainted  
“ with all the ordinances and regulations that  
“ have been enacted for the good of the service,  
“ and with the view of introducing into the army  
“ a rational and indeed an indispensable discipline, so soon as regulations have been signed  
“ by the King the duty of a minister consists in  
“ their faithful execution ; any departure from  
“ them on his part would be culpable ; all order  
“ would be at an end ; every thing would go by  
“ favor ; old and faithful services would lose their  
“ reward ; emulation would be banished from the  
“ army, and discontent universally prevail.”

“ But who,” quickly replied the Queen, “ pretends to break through all ordinances and regulations ?” I smiled, and said nothing. “ Come, be candid,” continued the Queen ; “ would you give me to understand that your father receives unreasonable recommendations from me ?”

“ Yes, Madam ; but you are not aware of it ; you are deceived by those who solicit your protection ; they take care to conceal from you, some, that they have not the requisite years of service ; others, that their neglect of their duty gives them no title to promotion ; in short, the greater part endeavor to disguise that the claims of their competitors are superior to, and of longer standing than their own.”



“ I will grant,” replied the Queen, “ that this may sometimes happen ; but why does not your father, instead of giving me a dry and unceremonious refusal, come and explain to me the real motives on which that refusal is founded ? ” “ This is assuredly, Madam, what he would wish to do, but it seldom happens that your occupations and his own will allow him.”

“ Well then,” said she, at last, with that gracefulness which was so natural to her, “ I am willing to believe that he has no intention of disobliging me ; I rely upon his gratitude ; I even esteem him for that severity which perhaps partakes a little too much of harshness ; I allow that I am often too readily persuaded to grant recommendations in favor of persons whose claims are but little known to me ; *I like that no one should ever leave me dissatisfied* : but, in order to avoid all these misunderstandings for the future, I wish that, whenever I shall attach some importance to a petition, and urge its being granted, your father would come and speak to me, or commission you to explain to me the motives that may prevent him from acceding to it ; tell him that we are reconciled together, that I am not angry with him, except for the impatience with which he tendered his resignation ; neither the King nor I will consent to accept of it ; for we are quite satisfied that he only desires the good of our service, and is more capable than any one else of promoting it.”

I was quite pleased at carrying back to my

father these obliging expressions. He followed the course which the Queen had enjoined to him ; and I may declare, with perfect truth, that ever afterwards, when similar discussions arose on the occasion of some important appointments, the Queen heard without displeasure, and approved without hesitation, every refusal which my father opposed to intrigue, and of which I was often commissioned by him to explain to her the motives. Thus, a circumstance which had at first appeared so unfavorable to our interests, tended to raise my father in the estimation of that Princess, and to increase the favor with which she had been pleased to honor me.

I recollect another circumstance, which will prove the necessity there existed of maintaining an unceasing struggle against court favor and power. The rank of colonel-general of infantry had been recently created in favor of the Prince de Condé. Nothing was more natural than to bestow it upon a prince of the blood, who had upheld, in all its brilliancy, at the head of our armies, a name dear to France and familiar with victory ; but, at the same time, policy required that this should only be an honorary rank, quite divested of that real power which had accompanied it, when held by such men as the Duke d'Epemon, at a time when too many traces of the ancient feudal anarchy were yet in existence.

As, however, we are never just and impartial in our own cause, the Prince de Condé loudly called for a restitution of some of the old privileges attached to this appointment, and bitterly com-

plained of the resistance of the minister who opposed his wishes. This prince invited me to call upon him, and told me that he knew I had a great influence over my father's mind, and that I should render him a very acceptable service, if I exerted that influence to obtain a restitution of those prerogatives which could not, without injustice, be withheld from him.

I in vain assured him that he had been deceived ; that I was too young and far too inexperienced to possess any influence over a mind so firm and so enlightened as that of my father. " He must, " besides," I added, " have very strong motives for " resisting the wish of your highness ; but I know " him too well, not to inform your highness that if, " after mature reflection, he finds that the restitution of the privileges you claim would be attended with serious inconvenience : nothing in " the world, except a special order from the king, " will induce him to alter his resolution."

" I request, however, you will sound him," replied the prince ; " whatever you may say to the " contrary, I am well aware that your father " poses full confidence in you ; I offer you an opportunity of obliging me ; do not neglect it ; " you are now a colonel ; I am destined, from my " name and my services, to the command of our " armies, as soon as any important war shall take " place in Europe. I shall feel grateful for the " service you will have rendered me ; and you " cannot be insensible to the advantage it would " then be for a young colonel to possess the good-

“ will of a chief who has it in his power to afford  
“ an officer opportunities of distinguishing him-  
“ self, and of thus acquiring claim to rapid pro-  
“ motion.”

I confess that I felt very much hurt at finding that the prince could suppose me capable of endeavoring, through motives of personal interest, to obtain from my father a determination contrary to his opinion and to his principles ; and I therefore confined my answer to the prince to an assurance that I would give my father a faithful account of the conversation with which his highness had just honored me. He made me a cold bow, much surprised, no doubt, at a frankness and pride which he little expected from a young courtier.

I withdrew, and returned to my father, who entirely approved of my conduct. The prince did not obtain what he asked for ; the King resisted the demand as his minister had done ; and I form too high an opinion of the noble and eminent qualities of the prince de Condé to believe, notwithstanding the coldness he afterwards evinced towards me, that he felt any real resentment at a conduct which must have merited his inward approbation.

I shall only mention one more anecdote relating to my father's administration. In its results, it is more important, as it gave rise to an erroneous opinion so widely diffused at the present day that it is next to impossible to alter it. Thus it is, that errors, when relied upon as truths, assume an historical character. I do not how-

ever, write this in the hope of entirely removing the opinion I allude to; but in relating facts precisely as they occurred, I consider that I am fulfilling my duty.

It has been generally believed and reported in France, that an ordinance, enacted by my father, had excluded from the military profession, the whole of the third class of the state, by requiring of those, who wished to obtain the rank of officer, the production of proofs of their nobility, which were to be examined and certified by M. Chérin, the genealogist of the court.

This ordinance gave rise at first to loud complaints, and subsequently to violent outcries against the aristocratic and unjust pride of the minister. It was even generally considered, by the most moderate men of all classes, as a harsh and ill-judged measure, entirely at variance with the spirit of the age, and in short as one of the principal causes of that universal discontent, which prepared the public mind to a revolution in the state.

If even these facts were as true as they are incorrect, nothing would be easier than to justify in this respect the memory of my father, if such were my object. I would first prove that nothing can be more unjust than to judge the laws and ordinances of an old monarchical and aristocratical government according to the principles of a representative and a popular government. Laws must be enacted in conformity with the nature of the institutions, which it is their object to

support, to defend, and to strengthen ; and in a country where, during ten centuries, the aristocracy, that is to say, the nobility had been in the enjoyment of a great proportion of the rights of sovereignty, it was quite natural that, after having successively lost its most important privileges of feodality and of seignorage, it should at least endeavor to preserve the last of them, the military privileges which it had always enjoyed unmolested.

But it is unnecessary to resort to this means of defense ; few persons would give it its due weight ; and it would ill become me, as it is in opposition with my own opinion, which made me wish at that time, for the good of the monarchy, that every reform should be adopted which the progress of civilisation and of knowledge rendered necessary ; I was firmly convinced, that unless this wise course were pursued, it was impossible to avoid the heaviest calamities and the most dreadful convulsions.

A faithful recital of facts will be sufficient to prove that the justice, which I think due to the memory of my father, is strictly impartial. It will prove, first, that the famous ordinance, which is ascribed to him, has not made those great inroads upon the rights of individuals that are attributed to it ; and that it has only modified the power of action, of a state of things previously in force.

It will, moreover, be clearly seen from my statement, that the ordinance in question, after being the subject of long debates, was issued upon the

decision of the majority, in the council, against the opinion of my father, who strenuously opposed it, and who, in yielding, as it was his duty to do, took care to insert, in the framing of it, several amendments, which tended to soften its severity.

These are facts which I should have brought to light at a much earlier period ; but, as long as the revolutionary storm continued to rage, I was bound to conform to the express injunctions of my father, who scorned to offer any explanation that might have been ascribed to a feeling of apprehension of the passions of the mob. Now, however, that I cannot be reasonably suspected of a wish to flatter the democratical party, when I am justifying my father from the odium of a measure so much in unison with the aristocratic spirit which is, at present, resuming a part of its former ascendancy, I think myself at liberty to reveal the whole truth.

It will be recollected that, at the time when my father was minister, a spirit of innovation very generally prevailed ; and that, whilst our citizens were mad after the English institutions, our military men, indignant at the check received during the seven years' war, endeavored to assume the character of Prussians, and, as far as was in their power, to imitate the troops of Frederick the great, their conqueror.

The suppression of abuses, new military tactics, and reforms were the general topics of conversation. The King, who did not wish to oppose an imprudent resistance, nor to yield, without

just grounds, to this fermentation in the public mind, had appointed a committee, composed of twenty-four inspectors of cavalry and of infantry, who were to examine, with care, every branch of the military administration, and render, to the minister, an account of their labors, in a report which he was to submit to the King in council, with his opinion upon it.

This report, after a discussion of several months, was given to my father. It contained the substance of the many complaints which had been preferred, from all quarters, respecting the organization of our army, its tactics, and especially the abuses introduced into the mode of appointment to vacancies.

The inspectors had favorably received the complaints of several of the nobility, who pretended that, being unable to embrace any other than the military profession, without derogating from their station, they saw it, henceforth, nearly closed against them, as much from the effects of a peace of ten years' duration, which rendered the vacancies to places of more rare occurrence, as from the facility, generating into abuse, with which those ordinances were allowed to be evaded, which required, previously to the appointment of an officer, that certificates of nobility should be produced, bearing the signatures of four noblemen.

“These certificates,” they said, “are frequently given to plebeians, by young noblemen in pecuniary difficulties, who thus have it in their power to pay their debts. This intolerable imposition



“ deprives the poor nobility of every means of  
“ obtaining appointments, from which they are  
“ daily excluded by rich young men, chosen out  
“ of the third order in the state.”

When my father brought up this report to the council, he warmly opposed the opinion of the inspectors, and the conclusions they had drawn favorable to the pretensions of the nobility. “ If  
“ the imposition complained of,” said he, “ were of  
“ as frequent occurrence as it is supposed to be,  
“ it would only tend to prove the impossibility of  
“ maintaining an order of things which every body  
“ endeavors to elude, as being no longer in har-  
“ mony with our manners, and with the progress  
“ made in knowledge and in wealth, by the third  
“ class which feels offended at this degradation.  
“ How do you think it possible for them to bear the  
“ idea that the son of a respectable magistrate, of  
“ a merchant held in general esteem, of an inten-  
“ dant of province, entrusted with one of the most  
“ important branches of administration, should be  
“ condemned to serve the state as a common sol-  
“ dier, or to attain the rank of officer only at an  
“ advanced age, after having grown old in the  
“ lowest ranks? It were much better to attack  
“ the unreasonable prejudice which ruins the whole  
“ of the nobility, by not permitting it to adopt  
“ any other than the military profession ; the law,  
“ of which they demand the execution, is falling  
“ into disuse, because it is contrary to the manners  
“ of the age ; it would neither be just nor reason-  
“ able to allow it to recover fresh vigor. It is, in

“ fact, quite unnecessary ; for, whatever may be  
“ said to the contrary, the nobility, by its position  
“ and influence, will always be certain of obtaining  
“ the preference for the greater number of appoin-  
“ ments ; and, moreover, this revived law, with-  
“ out satisfying all the pretensions of the privi-  
“ leged classes, would produce a general dissatis-  
“ faction in all the other classes of the state.”

This advice was assuredly dictated by the soundest reason, and the most equitable judgment. The contrary opinion, however, prevailed, and it was determined that, henceforth, M. Chérin, the genealogist of the court, should deliver certificates of nobility, to which four noblemen should have previously affixed their signatures.

My father was directed to draw up an ordinance in conformity with this decision. He obeyed, but in framing it, he excepted from the obligation of producing the required proofs, the sons of knights of Saint-Louis, and the appointments of officers in several corps of light troops ; so that, independently of the means of promotion secured to long services, and offered by the chances of war, the third estate possessed perhaps greater facility after this ordinance than before, for embracing the profession of arms.

Little attention, however, was paid to these modifications ; the old order of things, and the proofs of nobility formerly required, seemed to be entirely lost sight of, and a general belief prevailed that my father had inflicted a humiliating exclusion upon the third class of the state, and his ordinance

became the principal object towards which the hatred and ill-will of the plebeian class, against the nobility, already of too bitter a character, were henceforth directed. Such are the facts in their naked truth; public opinion, hitherto deceived, will now judge them.

My father ought, I think, to have been less subjected than any other man to such reproaches. Notwithstanding the austerity of his outward appearance and manners, he was generous and humane; he sought merit every where, afforded it encouragement and protection against intrigue, and gave it its due reward; the justice of his principles ensured a welcome to every well-founded claim; his unwearied activity never suffered that a becoming letter should remain unanswered; he never turned a deaf ear to good advice, nor to such as might open his eyes to the errors into which he might have fallen.

Abilities, information, zeal for the profession and in the discharge of its duties, services of long standing, numerous wounds, brilliant actions were the only qualifications and claims which he considered valid. Consequently the old officers and old soldiers were sincerely attached to him, and extolled his goodness, while the warriors covered with wounds loved to count those he had received. The young courtiers also complained of his severity, and of his strict adherence to rules and discipline.

The order and economy of his administration afforded him more abundant means than any of

his predecessors had possessed of bestowing rewards upon real services, and he was even enabled, through the resources produced by this wise economy, to provide a fund for the payment of pensions to the oldest knights of the order of Saint-Louis.

Until then our soldiers had slept three in a bed; he it was that reduced that number to only two. Disorder prevailed in our hospitals; the expenditure of that important branch of administration was excessive and ill conducted, the measures he adopted had the effect of reducing that expenditure, and of enabling our hospitals to receive a greater number of patients, and to take better care of them. His ordinance, on that subject, met at the time with universal approbation.

Under his directions the education given to officers was considerably improved. Crowds of spectators came on all sides, to admire the fine condition of our troops, their exact discipline, and the regularity of their manœuvres. He always confided the most important commissions to leaders recommended to his confidence by public estimation, and those who so eminently distinguished themselves in the American war, rendered full justice to the sagacity of his instructions.

He had been the first to conceive, and to present to the notice of the King, the idea of forming a corps of light artillery, and a staff corps, to which we were subsequently indebted for so large a portion of our glory and renown. In short, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances in which he was placed, and all the exigencies of the court

the military pensions, which, under all preceding ministers had been annually augmenting, received no further increase, during his administration of seven years, because he had the prudent firmness never to bestow any new pensions except in exact proportion to the extinction of those upon the list. Such was his ministerial life, as respectable at the court, as it had formerly been in the camp. The details I have entered into, will I trust be excused in favor of the sentiment which has dictated them. If oblivion of the wicked be a salutary maxim, let us be permitted to add to it that all ought to unite in attempting to rescue honest men from that fate. This will be found one of the best means of augmenting their number, unfortunately too small at all times, and more particularly in those elevated situations which are exposed to so many jealousies, and to such seductive temptations, and are continually surrounded by so many perils.

If my father, in spite of his love of justice, still met with instances of ingratitude and discontent, it must be confessed that I added, in some degree, to the number. For, not wishing, in spite of my solicitations, to favor me, at the expence of the just pretensions of others, he persisted in refusing me an opportunity of earning any of the laurels gathered by several of my fellow soldiers in America.

At length, however, this long delayed favor was granted to me. The Viscount de Noailles, having obtained, after the capture of York-town, the chief command of a regiment which had remained

in France, I was appointed lieutenant colonel to the regiment of Soissonnais in his place; and I quitted without regret the dragoons of Orléans, notwithstanding my attachment to them, having received orders to depart and embark, in order to join my new corps in the United States.

After having so long and vainly sighed to appear in the field, I hoped to enter upon a warm and brilliant campaign, which might terminate the war by the taking of New York, and subsequently, perhaps, by the conquest of Jamaica, for such was, then, the project of the ministers.

When I arrived at Brest, early in April, 1782, I found several frigates waiting for us, as well as a large convoy of merchant vessels, and transports, prepared for our conveyance. At the same port there were likewise, two battallions of recruits, which were intended to reinforce the army of Rochambeau.

I received orders to assume the command of these, and also to inspect and exercise them, until the moment of setting sail. This minute part of my duty I accomplished with great exactness. It was a tedious occupation, and lasted much longer than I had foreseen.

An English squadron, receiving intelligence of our preparations, and favored by the winds, which were contrary for us, succeeded in blockading us, and cruised before the harbour, with the intent of attacking us and taking our convoy.

Just at this period, we heard the unfortunate tidings of the defeat of M. de Grasse; but this

reverse, far from discouraging us, only redoubled our ardor.

The wind at length changing, gave us hopes of escaping from this port to which we had been condemned like so many convicts. Orders were sent to us, to leave our convoy at Brest, and embark on board *la Gloire*, a frigate of thirty-two guns, some of which were twelve pounders.

At the time of this first embarkation, I had for fellow passenger in the *Gloire*, the Duke de Lauzun, the Prince de Broglie, son of the Marshal of that name, the Baron de Montesquieu, grandson of the author of *l'Esprit des Loix*, and the Count de Loménie, who afterwards perished in the revolution. To these were added, an Irish officer, of the name of Sheldon, Polawski a Polish gentleman, the Baron de Liliehorn, aid de camp to the King of Sweden, and the Chevalier Alexander de Lameth, who afterwards rendered such distinguished services to his country. He there became celebrated by his talents, by his political ability, by his character, by his noble devotedness to his country, by his constitutional principles, and by the persecutions which they brought down upon him.

From the moment he joined me, may be dated his love of liberty, and our mutual attachment; feelings, that for the space of forty years, have continued to preserve the same undiminished influence over his mind and my own.

It would have been difficult to find a more pleasant travelling companion, than the Duke de Lauzun; to easy manners, and a social disposition, he united a generous spirit, whilst the natu-

ral grace of his deportment was quite peculiar to himself. He showed me a short letter from M. de Maurepas, to whom he had warmly recommended some affair in which he was much interested. This epistle, of hardly four lines, conveyed a striking idea of the lively and trifling character of that old minister:—" *I have not been able,*" he wrote, "*to do any thing in the affair you mentioned to me ; you had only the King and myself in your favor on this occasion ; such are the consequences of keeping low company.*"

The sensations which, at that time, animated the breasts of our warlike youth, who tore themselves with enthusiasm from their homes, from their pleasures, and from their affections, to seek toils and dangers in another hemisphere, deserved to attract attention, and were sufficient to have announced, to penetrating minds, those great approaching changes which were destined to take place in Europe.

We no longer now, as formerly, went forth as valiant knights, seeking, like the Norman heroes, adventures and principalities at the point of the sword, or warriors led, like the crusaders, by a pious fanaticism, or English and French adventurers, or grasping Spaniards, mad with the thirst of gold, who hastened to depopulate and cover with blood, a world discovered by Columbus. We were not even solely instigated by that desire of glory and of rank, which had before caused the swords of Frenchmen to leap from their scabbards in all the wars carried on by the different powers of Europe against each other.



Some individuals, indeed, continued to be still exclusively animated by this last motive ; but the greater number of us were influenced by other and better sentiments ;—by a well judged and well grounded desire of serving our king and country, and of cheerfully sacrificing every thing to these duties, and by a yet more exalted principle, a sincere enthusiasm for the cause of American liberty.

In fact, another age was rising—every thing was changing its action and its object. It was extraordinary enough, to behold young courtiers going to the field of battle in the name of philanthropy, a sentiment which ought to lead us to detest war, and officers, who, by command of an absolute government, rushed towards the coasts of America, whence they were to bring back into France, the seeds of a lively passion for the establishment of political liberty, and independence.

I cannot better convey an idea of the exaltation which then agitated our minds, than by citing some passages from a letter which I wrote about this period, and which I do not peruse after a lapse of two and forty years, without feelings of pleasure.

“ Brest Roads, on board *la Gloire*. May 19, 1782.

“ In the midst of an absolute government,” I observed, “ every thing is sacrificed to vanity, to the love of fame, or what is called glory, but which hardly deserves the name of patriotism in a country where a select number of persons, raised to the first employments of the state, by

“ the will of a master, and on the precarious tenure  
“ of that will, engross the whole legislative and  
“ executive power ;—in a country where public  
“ rights are only considered as private property,  
“ where the court is all in all, and the nation  
“ nothing.

“ A love of true glory cannot exist without phi-  
“ losophy and public manners ; with us, the de-  
“ sire of celebrity, which may be directed either to  
“ good or evil, is the prevailing motive, while pro-  
“ motion depends not upon talents, but upon  
“ favor. It is more advantageous to become agree-  
“ able to power, than useful to our country ; and  
“ thus, instead of wishing to do honor to the land of  
“ our birth by our virtues, to enrich it with monu-  
“ ments, and to enlighten it with information, we  
“ exert our activity only in enterprise. Ambitious  
“ men neither dread a bad reputation, nor aim  
“ at acquiring a good and solid one ; all they wish  
“ is to obtain notoriety ; all they fear is silence  
“ and obscurity : strange egotists, who, ever living  
“ dependent upon others, still believe they live  
“ only for themselves.

“ If I appear to imitate them, that appearance  
“ is only illusory, for I pursue an object quite  
“ different from theirs. Although young, I have  
“ already had a good deal of experience, not a few  
“ trials, and have mastered many errors. Arbitrary  
“ power is irksome to me, while liberty, for which  
“ I am preparing to combat, inspires me with a  
“ warm enthusiasm. I should rejoice to see my  
“ country enjoy as much of it as is compatible with

“ our monarchy, our situation, and our manners ;  
“ even my affections serve to strengthen my pre-  
“ sent opinions.

“ United, by happy ties, to the grand-daughter  
“ of the Chancellor d’Aguesseau, my most earnest  
“ wish, in pursuing a different career from that il-  
“ lustrious magistrate, is to raise myself to the  
“ standard of his immortal principles of virtue, of  
“ justice, and of patriotism. In perusing his dis-  
“ courses and his other writings, we feel deeply sen-  
“ sible that this great minister of an absolute  
“ monarch never lost sight of the public good, the  
“ rights of his fellow citizens, and the limits pre-  
“ scribed to power, by everlasting reason, and by  
“ the fundamental laws of the state. That excel-  
“ lent magistrate, though so devoted to his king,  
“ displayed, in the tribunal, and in his legislative  
“ and administrative capacity, all the indepen-  
“ dence and all the virtues of a republican.

“ My admiration of so noble a model has fortified  
“ my mind against the false attractions of a mad  
“ ambition, and against the desire of riches ; it has  
“ given me strength to resist the allurements of the  
“ world. The last idol I worshipped was the ill-in-  
“ formed opinion of the vulgar ; but this has, at  
“ length, appeared to me in its proper colors, founded  
“ upon ignorance, misled by fortune, and present-  
“ ing us with deceitful incense, which is employed  
“ only in flattering successful vice, favored by the  
“ caprices of accident.

“ I indulge no other ambition than that of merit-  
“ ing the suffrages of public opinion, not such as it

“ is, but such as it ought to be, namely, the opi-  
“ nion of a free people, who possess a wise and pru-  
“ dent legislation. Thus, in separating at this time  
“ from all I hold dear, I do not make so painful a  
“ sacrifice to prejudice, but to duty. If I were a  
“ magistrate, I would willingly abandon the most  
“ delightful leisure to attend at the courts as early as  
“ five in the morning, for the purpose of struggling  
“ with injustice ; if a minister, I would expose my-  
“ self to exile, and to the fate reserved for truth in  
“ courts, in order to assert the cause of the op-  
“ pressed ; and, being a soldier, I leave my family,  
“ my native place, and all the charms of life, in  
“ order strictly to fulfil the duties of a profession,  
“ perhaps the noblest of any, when engaged in a  
“ just cause.

“ Such are the motives that direct me ; but there  
“ is one far stronger than the rest ; it is that of wish-  
“ ing to raise myself to the level of some gifted be-  
“ ings whom I cannot hope to emulate without exert-  
“ ing noble sentiments and virtues. At this time,  
“ their affection is, at once, the source of my regret,  
“ and the price of my sacrifices. The only consol-  
“ ation I feel in my separation from them, is the hope  
“ of rendering myself more and more deserving of  
“ their regard and esteem.”

At length the signal for our departure was given ; a fresh passenger, the Viscount de Vaudreuil, came to join us, and our frigate sailed on the 19th of May, 1782, with a breeze fresh enough to give us hopes of escaping the vigilance of the English fleet. But we had hardly steered three leagues

when a violent storm compelled us to change our course, and to trust ourselves in the dangerous passage called the *Raz de Tulinguet*, a place notorious for its frequent shipwrecks.

Exerting our utmost skill against the winds and waves, we succeeded in regaining the open sea, when the approach of two-and-twenty English ships obliged us, in order to avoid them, to steer close to the shore ; and, as the gale continued to increase in violence, we ran great risk of striking upon the rocks called the Glenans, against which the frigate *Venus* had been wrecked only a short time before.

A calm at length succeeded, but the rudder of our frigate had yielded to the strength of the gale, and was broken. We thus found ourselves compelled to enter the river Loire, and to cast anchor at Paimbœuf. Thus fortune, having proved contrary to our hopes, seemed to take pleasure in confining us to the coasts of France.

Until the 15th of July we received alternate orders to put to sea, and to delay our departure, proceeding, like a coasting vessel, only from port to port. Leaving Brest, we arrived at Nantes, from Nantes we sailed to Lorient, and from Lorient we finally reached Rochefort, at which place we met with *l'Aigle*, a frigate of forty guns, carrying twenty-four pounders, that was intended to proceed to America, in company with us.

The Baron de Vioménil, and the Duke de Lauzun, who were on their return to America, went on board *l'Aigle*, and the chevaliers de Vauban,

de Melfort, de Talleyrand, de Champcenetz, de Fleury, with many other officers, took advantage of the same opportunity. The Chevalier de Val-longue was the commander of our frigate, an old officer of the royal marine, who, notwithstanding his reputation for skill and bravery, and his long services, had only attained the rank of lieutenant.

The frigate *l'Aigle*, was under the orders of the Chevalier de la Touche ; a man of information, brave, animated and pleasing, and who had lately entered the navy. His numerous friends, combined with the influence of the Duke d'Orléans, had accelerated his advancement. He had the rank of captain in the service, and it was not without feelings of disappointment that M. de Val-longue thus found himself compelled to serve under the orders of a younger officer than himself, and who was, what was then termed, *an upstart in the navy*.

M. de la Touche was attached to his new profession, and discharged its duties with as much intelligence as honor. At the moment of his departure, however, a passion, which had gained the ascendancy over every other, led him to commit a very serious fault, the results of which might have been much more calamitous than they proved to be ; which, at first, was the cause of involving us in considerable difficulty, and afterwards gave rise to a misfortune which fell, principally, upon his own head.

A woman of whom he was deeply enamoured had followed him from Paris to Rochelle. The

rules of discipline did not permit her to embark with him, and yet he could not summon resolution enough to separate from her. We shall presently see what singular expedient he resorted to, in order to reconcile, as much as possible, his love and his duty. We again hoisted sail on the 15th of July, at the same time as a large convoy of merchant vessels, escorted by the frigate *Cérés*.

A short period after our departure, during the middle of the night, just as our company was engaged in manœuvring to resist a contrary wind, which blew pretty briskly, the frigate *Cérés* by tacking unskilfully, ran against our vessel with such violence, that we all imagined we had struck upon a rock.

We sustained no kind of injury from the accident, but the *Cérés* suffered so much as to be obliged to re-enter with her convoy into port. The following days, we made little progress: and, indeed, the wind was very slack. This tardiness, however, very justly surprized us, as we knew that *l'Aigle* was a much better sailer than our vessel, and yet we were continually obliged to slacken sail and wait for her, in order not to part company with each other.

We, at length, observed a merchant vessel that was following in the track of *l'Aigle*. It being impossible for such a vessel to sail like a man of war, we soon perceived, after several messages and boat parleys had been exchanged, that the

commander of *l'Aigle* had decided to take the merchant's vessel in tow.

The mystery was then cleared up; and we were convinced that it was M. de la Touche's mistress who delayed his course, and that he was thus desirous of bringing her with him.

It may well be supposed that our voyage, upon this plan, was destined to be very slow; we besides met with frequent calms, so that we employed three weeks in reaching the Azores, with a number of sick on board, and in fear of a scarcity of water. Thus situated, M. de la Touche adopted the resolution of casting anchor in some port of this little Archipelago.

During this tedious passage we had no other amusement than that of watching a succession of vessels to which we gave chase, according to the orders of M. de la Touche, in the hope of finding an enemy to engage and to conquer; but, in this expectation, we were uniformly disappointed, for on approaching these vessels, we recognised either neutrals or allies.

The Archipelago of the Azores belongs to the Portuguese; and Fayal is generally the port put into. The wind, however, which was contrary, would have detained us too long, and finding ourselves near Tercera, the chief isle belonging to the Azores, of which Angra is the capital; we steered for it in the hope of mooring there. Just as we were casting anchor, we were suddenly informed that we were in danger of utter destruc-



tion, owing to the current which would infallibly drive us upon the coast.

The commander of the port refused us admittance, though several merchant vessels were in it at the time. This officer sent to inform us, that, the port being exposed to sea-winds, our frigates would not be in safety there; that he could not answer for them, and that it would be safer for them to cruise in the roads, while they might send their boats to provide all the provisions and refreshments which might be wanted. This, in fact, was the plan we adopted.

Judging, from the appearance of these islands, as well as of those of Cape Verd, of the Canaries and from those groups of amphitheatres and mountains, whose isolated tops rise above the surface of the vast ocean, it is almost impossible to doubt of the former existence of a continent, since swallowed up in one of those great revolutions incident to the globe. Without reference to the new observations made on this head by our men of science, a single view is enough to convince us, that those islands are the summits of some chain of mountains belonging to that ancient continent buried for so many thousand years in the ocean.

The account given by the Egyptian priests, as it has been handed down to us by Plato, is, perhaps, exaggerated. It is difficult to believe that the Atlantes should formerly have conquered a part of Europe and Africa, and that the people of a single city, like Athens, should have expelled

and destroyed those proud conquerors ; but, such an exaggeration apart, no one can have seen the Azores and remain in doubt as to the existence and submersion of the Atlantides.

Situated amidst the waves of an immense sea, this lonely Archipelago, braving the tempests, the sub-marine volcanoes and the earth-quakes that often seem to threaten it with a fresh revolution, raises its verdant amphitheatres serenely into the clouds, adorned with perpetual spring. There are seen the flowers, and there are gathered the fruits of Europe and America, of Africa and Asia. The jasmine, the orange tree, the laurel, the acacia and the rose embalm the air with their perfume, and this air is so pure that no noxious creature can exist in it.

When we beheld the isle of Tercera from a distance, it presented to us only the appearance of a vast black mountain ; but on approaching Angra, we were regaled with the most delicious view. The sombre aspect of the mountain assumes a clearer hue, the summit of its pike alone retaining its arid appearance ; from this point or pike, the mountain stretches in a gradual declivity until it reaches the sea, and presents to the eye a magnificent amphitheatre covered with odoriferous woods, as diversified in their forms as in their colors. These woods are grouped in a very picturesque manner, often separated by opening glades, with fields and cultivated spots of all kinds, which at once bespeak abundance, and promise happiness.

At the lower part of a bay, in which the sea no longer retains its violence, is seen the town of Angra, which majestically rises on the side of the mountain. It is of great extent and defended by two forts, which present a cross fire at the entrance into the port. Several pleasure houses, of a very elegant and pleasing appearance, seem insensibly to connect the town with the country, so that the eye is not offended by any sudden transition in passing from a view of the regular buildings to the rural aspect of the valleys.

The Portuguese, like the Spaniards, possess treasures of which they know not the value; they even diminish them by the vices of their administration; and, opposing themselves to nature who lays riches at their feet, they refuse them from mere prejudice. By false calculations, they prefer monopoly to liberty, thus impoverishing themselves by denying to commerce that freedom which can alone inspire it with vigor. The Portuguese are almost the only people who are familiar with the Azores, and who visit them.

The inhabitants of Tercera, partaking with astonishment of the rare pleasure of receiving strangers, assured me that, during sixty years, they had only seen at Angra a few passengers in a French vessel and two English ships, none of which had remained there more than three or four days, like ourselves. The people of other nations are wholly unknown to them; so that in all kinds of information they are, at least, two centuries

behind us. Their wines, their corn, their cattle and their oranges find no other market than Lisbon and the ports of the Brazils.

Fayal, whose coasts are more accessible, with a more spacious port, affords a more frequent shelter to navigators, who are borne by the winds into these roads. They there purchase wines celebrated for their flavor. It is said that Saint Michael presents as delightful an aspect as Tercera ; but the repose of the inhabitants is there disturbed by strong volcanic explosions, as well as by frequent earth-quakes. The very names of the islands, *Graziosa* and *Flores*, seem to shew that nature has, likewise, as richly adorned them ; but they are very small and no ships cast anchor there.

Towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, there appeared a phenomenon in this Archipelago that greatly alarmed the inhabitants. Near the island of Saint Michael, a dreadful volcanic eruption was seen to launch into the sky an immense quantity of burning stone, and afterwards sent forth from the bosom of the deep, a small island about three leagues in extent ; which remained there during three years, after which it gradually disappeared.

The town of Angra is the residence of the government of this Archipelago. All the other isles send deputies who constitute the governor's council. The office of governor, at the period of our arrival, was filled by a member of one of the first families in Portugal. Though his troops

were few and poorly equipped, they were sufficient for the defence of an island which no one is tempted to attack, and where few convenient points are to be found for landing; while even these are tolerably well defended by batteries.

The moment I had set my foot on shore, I hastened to the house of the french Consul, whose name was Peyrez. In his youth, possessing no fortune, he went in search of it into Portugal, whence being led by commercial affairs to Tercera, the charms of a dark complexioned beauty, of the country, had fixed him to the spot.

This Consul, the least oppressed with business of any consul in the world, was delighted to receive some fellow countrymen. He treated us in his best style, in which he was assisted by the Senhora Peyrez, who did not seem much displeased to behold men, for the first time, without being compelled to obtain a glimpse of them through her lattice.

I took a long walk with my host through the greater part of the vallies in the island. Our promenade, however agreeable to the eye, was but little interesting to the mind; for nothing could be less fertile than the mind of my good fellow countryman.

He had nearly forgotten his country, was ignorant of what was passing in others; was attached only to his brown companion, and admired nothing except his little pavillion, which he entitled his pleasure house, and a walk of lemon trees, about a hundred paces long, which crossed his grounds. His

farm consisted of nine acres, which had cost him no more than eight hundred livres.

When I returned on board the frigate, pretty well tired with my expedition, I felt little inclination to return to Tercera; but the Duke de Lauzun, induced me to alter my mind.—“ I see,” he said, “ that you have had very little amusement, and it is your own fault. What could have possessed you to go to the French Consul, a plain and honest citizen, who can admire nothing but his row of lemon trees; is only graced with a slight knowledge of cookery,—who offers you only water out of his well, too fresh, and milk which is not fresh enough; I have seen him as well as you, but I took care not to sacrifice my whole excursion to him. I found, elsewhere, far better means of relieving my ennui, and gratifying my curiosity. Come with me; I will show you what is best worth seeing at Tercera, good cheer, a warm reception, a lively host, merry and eager to please, women animated and pretty, devotees full of complaisance, tender and coquetting novices, and a bishop who dances the *fandango* admirably well.”

“ You are jesting,” I replied; “ who is this rare being who has suddenly conceived for you so active and obliging a friendship?” “ The English Consul,” was his reply.—“ How,” I exclaimed;—“ surely you do not think of it! Are we not at war with England? and do you carouse with the Consul of that nation?”

“ Listen,” he continued ;—“ and do not pronounce rash judgments ! My host, it is true, is Consul for our enemy, England ;—but he accumulates employments, for he is at the same time, Consul for Spain, our ally ; and to crown the singularity of the thing, he is neither an Englishman nor a Spaniard, but a Frenchman, from Provence.”

“ He wants nothing, then,” answered I, “ in order to unite all qualifications, but to become a familiar of the Holy Inquisition.” “ Well, my friend,” returned Lauzun, “ I believe he is not deficient in any thing.” “ In that case, then,” said I, “ I can make no further objection. Come ! let us see this very extraordinary fellow, who wears so many liveries, and plays so many parts. Thrice blessed, surely, is the pacific island of Tercera, which, in the midst of all the terrific commotions raised by war in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, bears no uproar in its tranquil seat, but the noise of its own waves, the music of its guitars, and the song of its birds ; while it affords a residence to the Consuls of two powerful belligerent powers, not only living on terms of amity together, but consisting of one and the same person, who probably despatches in a very satisfactory way the affairs of both.”

We set out therefore, accompanied by the Prince de Broglie, the Viscount de Fleury, and two or three other of our companions in arms. We were introduced to the English Consul, who

fulfilled all our expectations; for he gave us some excellent tea, good suppers, good porter, very agreeable female society; and as we expressed our curiosity to learn the *fandango*, so much celebrated on account of its grave levity, and its air of sad voluptuousness, a young Portuguese, Co-adjutor to the Bishop of Angra, had the complaisance, with very little entreaty, to dance it in our presence.

This was not all;—the obliging Consul conducted us the next morning to a convent, where we saw several indulgent nuns, and very pretty novices; their complexion, a little sunburnt, did not weaken the charm of their fine black eyes, of their white teeth, and of their elegant figures. Their sight consoled us for the two formidable grates, that separated the room in which we were, from the interior of the convent.

The lady Abbess, followed by her young suit, presented herself very gravely behind the grate, her whole dress, mien and figure, strongly recalling to mind, the portraits of Abbesses drawn in the thirteenth century. Nothing was wanting to complete the likeness—not even the crosier which she held with an air of majesty in her hand.

After paying the first compliments, the ladies being seated, our encouraging Consul informed us, that, in compliance with the custom of Portugal, notwithstanding the presence of the lady Abbess, with her crosier, we might show ourselves as gallant as we pleased towards her young flock, because in all times, devotion and gallan-



try were known to reign together in peace, within the cloisters of the chivalric land of Portugal.

Each of us then selected the object that most attracted his attention, and seemed most tenderly to return his looks. We speedily entered upon the subject of love, but awed by the presence of the lady abbess and the two grates, we treated it in a very innocent and platonic kind of way.

It may be difficult to surmise, how, when our young companions were ignorant of the French language, and we knew not a word of their Portuguese, we were enabled to understand each other; but nothing was impossible with the help of our officious consul. He played the part of our interpreter, and thus removed the first obstacle to our conversation.

The signal of this gallant discussion was given by a young pensioner, the *Senhora* Donna Maria Emegelina Francisca Genoveva de Marcellos de Connicullo di Garbo. This lady, struck with the handsome appearance, the animated countenance, and the dress of Lauzun, who was in the uniform of an hussar, threw him a rose through the grate, with a fascinating smile, and asked him his name. She then gave him a corner of her handkerchief, which he seized, while she attempting to pull it back the sweet vibration, that ensued from the struggle, seemed to pass from the hands to the heart.

We all availed ourselves with eagerness of this example, and handkerchiefs flew rapidly about on all sides, as well as flowers, and as our young Portuguese now shot glances that seemed to ex-

press a wish of dispensing with the grate that intervened between us, we felt ourselves bound to reply to such a challenge, by sending them kisses, though not without a fear of appearing too daring to our lady Abbess. This pleasantry however did not in the least disturb her gravity, nor alarm her indulgent prudence. We continued, therefore to imprint our kisses on the corner of our ladies' handkerchiefs, who very obligingly restored us those kisses in their turn at the corner of the handkerchief which remained in their hands.

We soon began to address them in a sort of Portuguese, made out of the little Italian we knew. This attempt succeeded, and our young mistresses following our example, the conversation soon became more lively and direct, though only half understood, which afforded our consular interpreter a little breathing time, and he took advantage of this to converse with the lady Abbess.

At length the good old lady joined in our conversation, and perceiving perhaps, that our pleasure was a little mingled with surprize, she informed us, through the medium of our consul, that pure love was extremely agreeable in the eyes of the Lord. "These young people," added she, "to whom I permit you to offer your tender homage, will one day I trust, appear more lovely in the eyes of their husbands by this lesson in the art of pleasing, while those who may consecrate themselves to a religious life, having exercised the warmth of their imaginations and

“ the sensibilities of their souls, will become more  
“ tenderly attached to the Divinity. On the  
“ other side,” she continued, “ this specimen of  
“ ancient gallantry, once so honored, cannot but  
“ prove highly useful to young warriors like you.  
“ It will inspire you with the spirit of chivalry ;  
“ it will excite you to merit by noble actions, the  
“ heart of those whom you love, and to do honor  
“ to their choice, by covering yourselves with  
“ glory.”

I am not sure whether the consul rendered the speech correctly ; but the fire that sparkled in the eyes of the lady Abbess, her dignity, her tone of voice, and her crosier, while they raised my admiration of her eloquence, seemed to transport me into one of the old enchanted islands described by Ariosto, and into the long famed ages of the Paladins.

Reanimated therefore by such advice, I redoubled my ardor for our gallant sport, while the soft interpreter of my passion, the pretty handkerchief of the sovereign lady of my thoughts, grew more volatile and active than ever. She was not, to be sure, gifted with such a list of baptismal names as her companions ; for the Prince de Broglie's lady monopolized the names of Eugenia Euphemia Athanasia Marcellina d'Antonios de Mello. Mine was more modestly entitled Donna Mariana Isabella del Carmo, and, at that moment, I believe, I should have maintained with lance in rest, against every knight

who ventured to question the fact, that she was the prettiest of them all.

As variety is the soul of pleasure, we ventured after long engagements of eyes, of handkerchiefs, and kisses wafted through the air, and not much cooled on their passage through the grating, to hazard a few *billets-doux*. They were introduced by the complaisant consul, while the good Abbess, having perused them without laying down either her dignity or her crosier, forwarded them with a smile, giving free circulation to these tender epistles, and to the answers they brought back.

I next hazarded a song, and the Prince de Broglie followed my example. I know not whether my verses were improved or injured by the consul's version of them, but they seemed to meet with a very favorable reception.

The day declined ; the lady Abbess gave the signal for our retreat, and a very tender farewell then took place on both sides. A second meeting however was appointed for the next day, and it may be easily believed that we were all of us pretty exact to the hour.

Upon again reaching the convent, we found the grate ornamented with flowers of every kind, while the ladies appeared a thousand times more pleasing than the day before. They regaled us with music, the mistress of the Prince de Broglie and of the Duc de Lauzun singing us duets of very tender airs, and accompanying them upon the guitar.

At the same time the lady of the Viscount de

Fleury and my own joined us in a dance. We represented as well as we could, upon opposite sides of the grate, all those steps which this cruel grate prevented us from executing as they ought to be ; but what was perhaps, the most amusing of all, was to see the lady Abbess, beating time with her crosier.

Donna Euphemia afterwards treated us with an extemporaneous song, bearing a double sense, alluding to the *passion* of our Saviour, and to that with which Lauzun had inspired her.

To give an idea of the ready and inventive genius of our Consul, it ought to be mentioned that, at the moment when the distance and the closeness of the bars had put a stop to the circulation of our billets, our active interpreter, having discovered a little hollow shovel, embarked our letters in it, which thus gently reached their destination.

In love as in ambition, we all know that it is difficult to stop ; and complaisance now rendered us presumptuous. We began to demand love tokens ; our vows were listened to ; for we received, along with fresh billets, all very kind, locks of hair and scapularies, which we placed upon our hearts.

We, too, made presents in our turn ; we sent back rings and locks of hair. Lauzun and the Viscount de Fleury happened to have their own portraits in their pockets, which, by some chance or other, had been returned to them just when they were on the point of setting out from

France. These they presented to the ladies of their choice. From my Marianna Isabella I received a scapulary ; she assured me that it would bring me luck, and that, as long as I wore it round my neck, I had need not fear any kind of accidents or disease. I promised that I would never part with it ; but her prophecy was certainly not verified, as, in a few days after, I was seized with a fever, and, as will appear hereafter, I was shipwrecked upon the coast of America, and lost all my baggage.

We were now told that our platonic loves at the convent had given rise to some anxiety in the town ; and that brothers, uncles and lovers began to be alarmed. A report had got abroad that, in the midst of our sports, we had been guilty of the temerity of secretly soliciting the young pensioners to afford us the means of conversing together without the grate, and of scaling the garden walls during the night. I know not, indeed, what might have ensued, nor whether our little romance might not have terminated after the ancient Spanish and Portuguese fashion, by some serenades disturbed by some exploits with the sword. It is, at least, certain, that, on retiring, we observed several men in large cloaks and great slouched hats, who appeared to be upon the watch.

However this may be, either the wind that sprung up, or the prudence of M. de la Touche, quickly dissipated all our hopes and all our anxiety. The signal for setting sail was given ;

the firing of three guns recalled us on board, and we had only just time to return and say adieu to our fair friends, who were quite inconsolable.

We found the grate hung mournfully with garlands of the scabius, which our young beauties called *flowers of regret*, or, in their language, *saudades*. The good Abbess had tears in her eyes; and, I believe that, for the first time in her life, she let her crosier escape from her hands and fall to the ground. Each of our young *senhoras* made us a present of a pansy, which we attached to our cockades, and of a handkerchief which they had steeped in their tears. At length we departed, with their images engraved on our hearts.

Our delightful convent, which would not, perhaps, have appeared out of place at the side of the ancient temples of Amathontis and Gnidos, has hitherto a little drawn my attention from the political and moral description of Tercera and of Angra; but, in fact, the subject is so slightly interesting, that a sketch of a very few lines will suffice.

If nature intended Tercera for a terrestrial paradise, the monks, an ignorant administration and despotic power, have, in spite of her, converted it into an impoverished, wretched and wearisome residence.

Out of a population of ten or twelve thousand, six or seven hundred are found to consist of monks or nuns. Devotion is mingled with licentiousness, in a manner as indecent as it is ridiculous,

and nothing is more usual there, than to witness, in the evening, the amorous oglings and conversations of courtesans, interrupted by frequent genuflexions and signs of the cross, at the moment the *angelus* is rung. There is an establishment of inquisitors in the colony; though I was assured that they burnt nobody, contenting themselves with the incarceration of all sinners, and the confiscation of their property.

I am not sure whether the Portuguese of Angra support their old reputation, and whether there are many jealous husbands there; but blinds are to be seen in all the windows, almost always in motion, as if to announce that there are women behind them, who are eager to see, and who would very willingly be seen.

All civil causes are carried before a tribunal that is said to dispense equal justice; and of which the governor is president in the trial of all the most important cases. We called at his house, but were told we could not see him, on account of his being too unwell. I may be excused for not recollecting his names, since he had at least ten or a dozen. His son, Don Joseph Mendoza, received us in his place, with all the etiquette exhibited in the old times, and in a palace of rather a gothic aspect.

The most remarkable circumstances accompanying our audience, were the frugality of the slight refreshments laid before us, the dryness of our host's conversation, the singular simplicity of his questions, and the whimsical cut of his



dress. He was arrayed in an ancient worn out scarlet coat, with gold fringe, and an enormous hat no less magnificently lined. His waistcoat with great skirts of a light blue color, with yellow breeches, completed his toilet. He bore a much stronger resemblance to an actor in a opera buffa, than to the governor of a colony.

We did not think a second visit at all essential ; but he was invited to dine with us, by M. de la Touche. He accordingly came on board *l'Aigle*, and appeared to be a good deal amused ; he shewed some information, expressed in an almost unintelligible jargon, which he imagined was French. As he was, moreover, young and jovial, he greatly amused the ship's company, by performing the exercise in a very awkward style, and deafened us, by beating a drum in the most unmerciful manner, accompanied by two of his attendants, during a whole half hour, assuring us that it was the instrument he liked best. Yet the sequel of his little maritime campaign was not fortunate ; for on taking leave, being alarmed by a violent rolling of the ship, he placed his hand awkwardly upon the side of the boat, which coming somewhat rudely in contact with the frigate's ladder, crushed his thumb.

We did not bestow many thoughts upon our unfortunate governor ; for, on losing sight of the Archipelago of the Azores, we found our imaginations still occupied with the abbess and her lovely young flock.

The gallant scenes at the convent of Angra,

which I have just faithfully described, and of which I have seen, also, a short account from the pen of the Prince de Broglie, produced such an effect upon the Duke de Lauzun as to awaken his poetical ardor, and he made it the subject of a little heroi-comic drama, which he entitled the *Duke of Marlborough*.

We reckoned upon continuing to sail towards the south, in order to meet the trade winds, and it was with no little surprise that we found M. de la Touche directing our course to the north west; we were not long, however, in discovering the cause of this sudden resolution.

In addition to the two millions five hundred thousand livres which *l'Aigle* was conveying to America, M. de la Touche carried despatches, which were not to be opened until we were off the Azores. How great must have been his regret and anxiety, when on breaking the seal, he found an order to employ the utmost diligence in his progress, to avoid any engagement or pursuit likely to impede him, because the despatches contained a plan of operations for a new campaign, and it was of importance that it should reach the Count de Rochambeau, as speedily as possible as well as the Marquis de Vaudreuil, who commanded our naval forces, and was awaiting our arrival in one of the North American ports!

Regretting too late, the delay he had wilfully occasioned in the voyage by taking in tow the merchant vessel bearing his mistress, and by

unnecessarily giving chase to all the vessels he had seen, M. de la Touche wished to repair his error by steering in the shortest direction for the American shores. But the event shewed how much he was deceived; for the merchant vessel which he now abandoned, after having pursued its course to the Canaries, where it encountered the trade winds, being favored by them, arrived at the mouth of the Delaware, on the same day as ourselves.

The frequent calms, prevailing at this season, made us lose more than fifteen days. During the remainder of our voyage we cautiously avoided every thing that could interrupt our progress. We only made a single prize, which was passing so close to us that we could not help taking advantage of the occasion. It was an insignificant little English vessel, carrying only a cargo of apples and other fruits; but during so tedious a navigation, and deprived as we were of water and refreshments, such a prize seemed a treasure.

Early every evening we were in the habit of putting out our fires in order that no vessel might perceive us; for we had been informed that an English squadron was prepared to oppose our passage, and possess itself of the two millions which we were carrying. This precaution, however, was not sufficient as will presently be seen to protect us from a sharp engagement with a ship of war, a memorable contest, which reflected the greatest honor both upon the commanders of our frigates and upon our crews.

We were now off the Bermudes, when in the middle of the night of the 4th of September we heard several plaintive cries at sea; it was the voice of a man swimming and struggling against the waves. He belonged to the crew of *l'Aigle*; while mounted upon the yards, a sudden launch of the ship had thrown him into the sea unknown to his companions. By great good fortune we found ourselves just then so exactly in the track of *l'Aigle*, that we passed close to the poor sailor, causing our lanterns to be lighted, we sent out a boat, and succeeded in saving the drowning man.

The lights were again extinguished, and every thing was as calm and obscure as before, when the officer upon watch came to warn us that he had perceived, through the dusk, a vessel approaching and that it was already very near us.

The signal was immediately made to prepare for action; we all rose and hastily armed ourselves, and in less than three minutes the hammocks with all the moveables were cleared away, the partitions were removed, the batteries were put in order, each man was at his post, and every thing was prepared to sustain a combat.

This diligence was, in fact, extremely necessary, for such was the darkness of the night, that there was no possibility of distinguishing the vessel until it was within musket shot. We had very little breeze; but this ship and our frigate running on opposite tacks, the distance between us grew less every moment.

Our night glasses on board *la Gloire*, were only of very indifferent quality; insomuch that forming a wrong idea of the vessel's dimensions, we at first took her for a merchant ship. *L'Aigle*, however, which sailed to windward of us, and which had better glasses, approached and M. de la Touche called out to us to steer away, the strange vessel being a man of war; but the sound of the waves prevented our hearing his words.

In the mean while, the ship coming down upon us, fired a gun to bring us to; it was already too late to take advantage of the wind and get away, besides the unknown vessel being then ashwart of us, and firing a second gun, prevented us from communicating with *l'Aigle*, so that we were now occupied only in returning the fire which we had received.

At the same time, *l'Aigle* supposing that we had heard her instructions, bore away before the wind, and was already at a considerable distance from us. But perceiving, at length, that we did not follow, M. de la Touche ordered a discharge of five canons, the signal agreed upon, for rallying. At this time, the vessel having lighted one of its batteries as it approached us, we then clearly saw that it was at least a frigate.

Our commander found himself in a very critical situation, in not obeying the order for rallying, he exposed himself to the charge of having slighted M. de la Touche's authority, out of jealousy to

his commander; but to execute this order, it was necessary to turn our stern to the vessel which had hailed us, and to expose ourselves to the fire of all its battery.

M. de Vallongue, however, prepared to obey, observing that this act of submission was likely to cost us dear. Accordingly after having first tacked, we had scarcely presented our stern to the enemy than we received the whole of his broadside from fore to aft, which damaged us very considerably.

It was highly requisite to extricate ourselves from the awkward position in which we were placed, and this we effected with much celerity, by a suggestion of an officer in the mercantile marine, named M. Gandeau who served as lieutenant on board our ship. Remarking M. de la Vallongue's hesitation and embarrassment, he ordered a manœuvre which brought us completely astern of the enemy, when we returned him the broadside he had given us, and with such good effect that, for a few moments, we saw that he was on fire.

M. de Vallongue with a degree of generosity that delighted us, embraced the lieutenant, thanked him, and declared that, during the whole of the combat, he would not issue a single order without consulting him.

As soon as the enemy's ship had received our gallant reply, she tacked also to starboard, in such a way that we found ourselves alongside,

running in the same direction and within pistol-shot.

The fire continued ; and it was then that the enemy having unmasked his second battery, we found that we were engaged with a ship of seventy four guns, it was the *Hector*, taken from us in the defeat of M. de Grasse. In fact, compared with this vessel our little frigate appeared a mere skiff ; and already her thirty-six pounders pierced our ship from side to side.

M. de Vallongue, believing his destruction now inevitable, resolved, at least to cast a lustre over it by an instance of daring intrepidity. Taking a trumpet, he cried out to the captain of the ship, that it was necessary, before cutting one another's throats, to know whether we were friends or foes.

Accordingly he demanded whether the vessel was English or French, to which the captain of the *Hector* having replied that it was English, M. de Vallongue boldly cried out : " Strike your colours !" " Yes, yes," replied the English captain ironically, and a terrible broadside completed his reply.\* We again returned the compliment and the action continued vigorously.

At the beginning of the engagement *l'Aigle* had determined to come to our assistance, and continued to approach, though, at the same time, slowly for want of a better breeze ; insomuch that

\* In the original, some English words, or words meant for English are here introduced : the passage runs thus : "*Streng your colour, amenez votre pavillion.*" Yes, yes, I'll do, *oui, oui, répondit ironiquement le capitaine, " je vais le faire."*

before she joined us, we had sustained for three quarters of an hour the enemy's fire.

We were no sooner aware of this frigate's arrival than we gave place to her, and stood off for the purpose of trying to repair the damage of the enemy's fire, which had already caused us to leak in many places.

*L'Aigle* engaged valiantly in her turn, and so close that the men at the guns on both side fought with their cannon rammers. The yards of the man of war caught those of the frigate; and at this crisis the Baron de Vioménil, as well as all the officers who were with him, cried out to board, in such a tone of ardor and audacity, that the captain of the enemy cut the ropes that kept him in contact with *l'Aigle*.

We were told that this captain had been wounded by our fire, and his crew was not very strong. His ship had many sick on board, besides a large number of French prisoners.

*L'Aigle*, being disengaged, fired so well that one of her balls, a twenty-four pounder, broke the *Hector's* rudder. From this time, *l'Aigle*, taking a somewhat more distant station, continued to cannonade the enemy in her quarters.

In the meantime, returning to the combat and passing athwart of the *Hector*, we received her broadside, but as we saw that she could no longer manœuvre, we took a position in her stern, cannonading her at our ease from poop to prow, while she could only return it by two small stern chasers.



Thus favored by fortune, we were in hopes of becoming masters of the *Hector*; but observing, towards the dawn of day, a number of sails in the distance, we quickly hoisted our own, and steered away. We afterwards learnt that the *Hector* being overtaken by a storm, had foundered at sea, and that an American vessel, which happened fortunately to be within sail, had saved the captain and a part of his crew.

An account of this engagement is to be met with in the *Annales de la Marine*; and it is there cited as one of the most honorable to the French flag. M. de la Touche was highly applauded, and M. de Vallongue received a commission of captain in the service.

Our loss in the two frigates consisted of about thirty or forty killed and one hundred wounded. *La Gloire* was a good deal injured and leaked, so as to keep the pump often employed, but luckily the remainder of our voyage was short.

It was impossible to display greater ardor and courage, or more discipline than were shewn by our crews on this occasion. The Prince de Broglie proved himself, by his intrepidity, worthy of his father. There was nothing, also, more remarkable than the coolness, the bravery, and the calm gaiety of Alexandre de Lameth.

All the land officers present, contributed, by their words and by their example, to sustain and animate the courage of the gunners and the sailors, during the most perilous moment of the battle. In the midst of the confused alternation of fire

and obscurity of silence and cries, the rolling of the waves, the thunder of the cannon, the whistling of the musket balls, the groans of the wounded, and the noise occasioned by the sudden fall of the broken rigging, ropes and pulleys, all the wonted gaiety of the French character was still displayed.

Alexandre de Lameth and myself were standing together on the quarter deck, during the warmest fire of the enemy. In passing before us M. de Vallongue happened to fall, as far as his waist, into the hatchway, which, by mistake, had been left open. Believing him to have been cut in two by the broadside of the English, we hastened down from the deck to his assistance, and, after raising him up, mutually congratulated one another on finding him perfectly safe.

The Baron de Montesquieu was standing near us ; we had, of late, been amusing ourselves with rallying him in regard to the words *liaisons dangereuses*, which he had heard us pronounce, and, in spite of all his inquiries, we had still evaded explaining to him that such was the title of a new novel, then much in vogue in France.

While we were thus conversing together, our ship received the fire of the *Hector*, and a bar-shot, a murderous junction of two balls united by an iron bar, struck a part of the quarter deck, from which we had, just before, descended. The Count de Loménie, standing at the side of Montesquieu, and, pointing to the shot, said, very coolly, “ You were wishing to know what these

“ *liaisons dangereuses* were ? there, look, you have “ them !”

In proportion to our former regret at the length and tediousness of our voyage, was the delight we now felt at the happy result of our engagement, as well as at the approaching termination of our voyage. On the 11th of September we discovered land, and at no greater distance than five leagues. The coast, in this place, was very low ; we could only, at first, distinguish a few trees, which appeared to be growing out of the water.

We, shortly after, recognized Cape James, which forms the southern point of Delaware Bay, whither we now, with difficulty, directed our course, on account of its position, to the north-west of us, from which quarter the wind blew ; yet we imagined we were just on the point of attaining our object, little thinking we were, at last, to sustain a reverse within sight of the port. Upon nearing the bay, we perceived a corvette coming out, and several larger vessels, under sail, out at sea, which we judged to be English men of war.

The corvette, which was also English, took us, to all appearance, for frigates belonging to her own nation, which she had quitted the day before. She approached near us, with imprudent confidence, without making her private signals, until she had got very close to us.

She soon discovered, however, by ours, that we were enemies, and set all sail to escape. But

it was too late ; for, in attempting to avoid the approach of *la Gloire* in pursuit of her, she was compelled to pass within cannon shot of *l'Aigle*, who raked her with a brisk fire. After a few shots, she struck her colors ; but, on account of the sea running so high, we were delayed two hours in taking possession of her, a delay that proved fatal to us.

The enemy's squadron, which had put to sea, was unable to assist the corvette, the wind proving contrary. In the mean while, after having manned our prize, we continued our course, though slowly, towards the bay ; for we had no pilot, and the river being full of sand banks, which often shift, no ships venture to enter, unless under the direction of sailors daily experienced in the task.

These difficulties determined M. de la Touche to moor, during the evening, on the outside of Cape James, and to send a boat ashore, in order to find a pilot. But fortune, which had hitherto continued in our favor, now declared against us. The wind became violent, the sky grew dark, and the waves swallowed up our boat. The officer who commanded it, and two seamen gained the shore by swimming ; the rest of the little crew perished.

Being ignorant of this misfortune, M. de la Touche, fearing lest the cause that retarded the boat's return might be the great darkness of the night, and the consequent difficulty of finding the frigate, lighted fires, and discharged several rockets.

This imprudent step did not escape the observation of the enemy's squadron, who saw that we had not yet entered the Delaware. To complete our calamity the wind changed ; it blew from the sea, and was, consequently, extremely favorable to the English for bearing down upon us. In fact, towards dawn of day, we observed two men of war, and several frigates, approaching us in full sail ; when we instantly cut our cables, fled, and were compelled to enter the river without a pilot.

The sand banks divide the river into four or five channels ; and, in order to steer with safety, it would have been necessary to keep to the south side, near the shore ; afterwards to traverse the river diagonally from south to north west, between two banks, and we should thus have found ourselves near the north shore, in an excellent channel, in which we might have navigated, without risk, as far as Philadelphia. But all this we were unacquainted with, having no pilot, and not being able to distinguish the banks which were hidden under water.

We drove directly, then, into the middle of the river, in the hope of finding more water there than elsewhere, and, unluckily, it was the wrong channel that we chose. The fear we had of striking, constrained us to steer closely with the sounding line in hand, and with very little sail.

The English, on the contrary, who had pilots on board, followed us rapidly, gaining upon us every moment, and we observed their vessels still increasing, and the distance which separated us

growing less. The sensations inspired by our helpless condition were indeed like a real nightmare.

*L'Agile* was the first that touched upon a bank, but after some exertions cleared off. Just at the time we were passing close to her, M. de la Touche, gave us orders, if we should happen to strike, to cut our masts, to sink the frigate, and to save in our boats, as many of our company as we could.

The English, in the mean while, had arrived within two cannon shot of us. In this desperate situation we had already resolved to drop anchor, and to prepare ourselves for a very unequal combat, the result of which could not long be doubtful, since we had to engage seven or eight of the enemy's vessels, and among others two ships of the line. On board of one of them was Prince William of England.

We had now lighted our matches, consternation had spread throughout our crew, when suddenly we saw the English vessels, which until then had followed us without fear of striking, since we had served them as it were for pilots, tack, and steer away from us. Two of their larger vessels, that drew deeper water had touched the banks, and Admiral Elphinston, their commander, did not venture to advance further up this dangerous channel.

Reassured by the cessation of their pursuit, and observing that the corvette which we had taken, proceeded before us without meeting any obstacle, we slowly continued our course. When

however, we found ourselves at the distance of six or seven cannon shots from the English. we cast anchor, while our enemies on their side, did the same.

Our commanders, both by sea and land, then met to hold a council on board *l'Aigle*; some were of opinion that we ought to have cast anchor and to perish fighting, others wished us to continue our course, in the hope that at least some one of our vessels might succeed in surmounting the difficulties that delayed us

At this time M. Gandeau the intrepid officer, sent with the boat that had been swamped, was seen bringing us two American pilots from shore. But the information of these two men, which two hours sooner would have filled our hearts with joy, now deprived us of all hope. After having examined our situation, they informed us that we were then in a narrow channel that grew still more shallow upon advancing, and that we should be stopped a little farther on by an impassable sand-bank. They added, that, in order to regain the right channel, it would be necessary to descend the river precisely as far as the spot where the English now lay moored.

It was then resolved that the land officers should embark in boats with the despatches. At length, M. de la Touche and M. de Vallongue determined to push forward into the river as far as possible, and when they could advance no further, to cast anchor, and to sell their lives and

their frigates to the enemy as dearly as they could.

They were yet deliberating when we saw the English squadron suddenly covered with sails, and its frigates approaching us pretty quickly. Upon this we weighed anchor, and again resumed our course. Half an hour afterwards, having seen the Baron de Vioménil, the Marquis de Laval, the Duke de Lauzun, the Count Bozon de Talleyrand, MM. de Chabannes, de Fleury, and de Melfort, with four soldiers, all disembark from *l'Aigle* in a boat, I followed their example and went in another boat with MM. de Broglie, de Lameth, de Montesquieu, de Vaudreuil, de Loménie, and the rest of our passengers, so that in one hour we had traversed the river, and landed upon the right bank, little sensible of pleasure in finding ourselves on land, such was our anxiety for the fate of our frigates, which found themselves more and more involved among the banks that must speedily arrest their course, and the English who were approaching to destroy them.

We had, at the same time, other subjects of disappointment to contend with. We had gained the shore, it is true, and trod the soil from which so many accidents had separated us, but we found ourselves destitute of baggage, of servants, of our trunks, and even without any shirts but what we then wore. We had moreover, set foot on a coast unknown to us, and inhabited by a



great number of partisans of the English cause, who were then called *Torics*.

The country, that lay before us, offered nothing to the view, but thick woods and dangerous marshes. We had no horses; and for the last four-and-twenty hours, chased by the English, and navigating painfully among the rocks, we had not been able either to eat or sleep. Yet, oppressed with weariness as we were, we lost not an instant in preparing to depart, taking advantage of the first beaten track we fell in with.

After wandering for some time in the woods, we remarked some inclosures, that seemed to indicate a human habitation, and we soon arrived at the house of an American, named Mr. Mandlaw.

The Baron de Vioménil, with the other passengers in *l'Aigle*, very shortly joined us there, when we learned that we were in a small division of the state of Maryland.

Arrived there our first care was to send back the boats with some provisions to our frigates. M. de Vioménil wrote to M. de la Touche; he requested him to forward, in a boat, during the night, the money destined for the use of the army; assuring him at the same time, as well as M. de Vallongue, that we would make every exertion to despatch boats to their assistance, that, in case of necessity, they might have a chance of saving some portion of their crews and of their effects.

MM. de Vioménil, de Laval, de Lauzun, with four soldiers, awaited the reply of the commanders of our frigates, in the house of Mr. Mandlaw ; in order to be ready to receive our two millions five hundred thousand livres when they should arrive.

MM. de Loménie, de Chabannes, de Melfort, de Talleyrand, and de Fleury were despatched to different points, with an order to gather information along the coast, and to supply us with oxen as well as with carts.

MM. de Lameth, de Broglie and I, together with the other passengers of *la Gloire*, set out with a negro guide to seek and to detain some boats in a little river, which falls into the Delaware, and which was said to be situated about three miles from the place where we had disembarked.

Our conductor took us a route, however, of at least eight miles on foot, and at a quick pace, through the woods and marshes ; and it was only at the end of two hours, that we arrived at the tavern of an American, named Mr. Pedikies, a short way distant from the little river. He received us very coolly, seemed disposed to place little confidence in us ; and it was only by dint of repeated promises, and by bribing him with money, and bills drawn upon the commanders of our frigates, that we determined him to induce the masters of several boats to execute our project.

They directly set out upon being paid, and descended the river ; when the sight of the English frigates alarmed them, and they either would not, or could not fulfil their promises.

After such a variety of sufferings, a morsel of roast beef and a bowl of grog, a beverage made of rum and water, appeared to me, with a hard couch, as delightful as Mahomet's paradise. Our delight, however, and our slumbers were of short duration; our anxiety awaked us; and we dispersed ourselves abroad very early to seek for horses, in order to rejoin our general. The greater our eagerness to procure steeds, the less inclination did the owners manifest in offering them, in order to make us pay a still higher price.

The Prince de Broglie was the first to succeed; he set out, and mistook, I believe, his road. Half an hour afterwards, having at length purchased a steed, I likewise, lost my way, and I arrived at the banks of the Delaware, in a very marshy place where my horse sunk in up to the girths.

I hardly know how I should ever have extricated myself, had I not met a young American on horseback, who offered me his services as guide. He informed me that a body of English had just landed, a circumstance that excited my utmost alarm for the safety of the general and his companions.

My horse was a stout one, and I believed I should be able with its assistance, to ascertain the truth of these tidings, trusting to my spurs for escape, if the report should be indeed true, and if I happened to meet any companions in a red uniform.

Consequently my guide and I struck into the

wood, taking a direction towards the house of M. Mandlaw.

About three miles from that place we heard the sounds of marching and of arms, when we concealed ourselves behind some thick bushes in order to learn the cause of this noise. We soon perceived the Baron de Vioménil on foot, with his aide-de-camp and four soldiers; they advanced, following a cart laden with the chests of gold which had been disembarked from our frigates.

I immediately joined him; and he informed me that, at the dawn of day, having arrived on the border of the river, he had seen the arrival of the boat with the money; but, at the same time, he had discovered another boat filled with red coats and musquets, which was hastening to prevent its landing.

He had despatched two soldiers to observe them more narrowly, and had succeeded in disembarking and getting possession of two chests of gold. Our boat, by firing several shots from a swivel intimidated and stopped the enemy, but suddenly two other English boats, full of armed men, advancing to attack us, ours were compelled to throw the chests of money into the water, and save themselves by flight.

The Baron de Vioménil having placed the gold upon a little cart, instantly set out for the town of Dover, where Lauzun, Laval, and the rest of the passengers had orders to rejoin him by different routes. Lauzun had been the first to set off, with the view of collecting at Dover, and sending

forward, all the means of escort that he could find.

I followed the general till within a short distance of Dover, and I again went back to look for my companions, in order to inform them of the general's proceedings, and of the probable landing of some English soldiers.

In a short time, we found ourselves assembled and our cavalcade being reinforced by MM. de Langeron and de Talleyrand, resumed its route along with us, to Dover.

We soon fell in with our precious cargo of gold but the general was no longer with it, one of his aide-de-camps informing me that M. de Vioménil having learned from two officers, newly landed from *l'Aigle*, that the enemy's boats had disappeared, and that we might possibly, at low water, recover our money chests which had been thrown into a shallow part, he had returned at full speed with Laval and other officers, leaving with us an order to escort the gold as far as Dover.

We arrived there at three in the afternoon, Lauzun had already despatched the cart, and assembled some soldiery whom Montesquieu was directed to conduct to the general.

About midnight, M. de Vioménil rejoined us with the cart. In spite of the excessive heat and fatigue, he had succeeded with M. de Laval, in recovering the remainder of the gold. We thus again became masters of our treasures, and though we were nearly naked, without equip-

ments, and without valets, we should have considered ourselves extremely happy, had it not been for the deplorable situation and great peril of our frigates.

The next morning, it was vaguely reported, that two of our vessels had escaped, but that *l'Aigle* had been compelled to strike her flag, after an hour's combat with the English frigates, the firing of which, we had heard during the whole of the night.

The general charged me with the instant conveyance of these tidings to M. de la Luzerne, then in the city of Philadelphia, and of the despatches addressed by the French court to this minister. I carried also my father's despatches to M. de Rochambeau; but M. de Vioménil begged me to keep them, and await at Philadelphia, the arrival of the rest of the letters intended for the army.

Before entering on the execution of this order, I was permitted to enjoy a few hours' rest: a relaxation quite essential, after so many fatigues, so much fasting, a shipwreck, and such long expeditions; but just as I was closing my eyes, I happened to observe the scapulary that I wore about my neck, and recalled, with some degree of anger, the false prediction of my tender donna Mariana Isabella del Carmo, nor did I fail to include in my reproaches the venerable Abbess of Angra, with her crosier.

I set out early in the morning for Philadelphia, and I could therefore only see Dover, in passing

through it. It was the first American town to which fortune had conducted me. Its appearance struck me ; it was surrounded with thick woods, because there, as in other parts of the thirteen States, the population was still scattered over an immense territory, a small portion of which was cultivated.

All the houses in Dover, offered a simple but elegant appearance, they were built of wood, and painted with different colors. This variety in their aspect, the neatness which distinguished them, the bright and polished brass knockers of the doors, seemed all to announce the order and activity, the intelligence and prosperity of the inhabitants.

To an eye familiar with the view of our magnificent cities, the foppery of our young fashionables and the luxury of our higher classes, contrasted with the coarse habiliments of our peasants, and the tatters of the vast crowds of our paupers, the difference exhibited on arriving in the United States, where the extremes of splendor and of misery are no where to be seen, is truly surprising.

All the Americans whom we met were dressed in well made clothes of excellent stuff, with boots well cleaned ;—their deportment was free, frank, and kind, equally removed from rudeness of manner, and from studied politeness ; exhibiting an independent character, subject only to the laws, proud of its own rights, and respecting those of others. Their aspect seemed to declare, that

we were in a land of reason, of order, and of liberty.

The road on which I travelled was very wide, well marked out, and carefully kept in excellent order. In all the places where I stopped, the inhabitants received me with civility, and exerted themselves in procuring horses, both for myself and my guide.

Every one appearing to feel a lively interest in public affairs. I found it necessary, before taking my departure, to reply as well as I could, to the numerous questions respecting the cause of the firing of cannon which had been heard on the Delaware, our landing, and the force of the enemy who had pursued us. All these questions were interrupted by offers of glass after glass of Madeira wine, which I could not refuse without rudeness, nor accept so very often without inconvenience.

Continuing my journey through a path like a fine garden alley, shaded by the oldest and most beautiful trees in the world, I scarcely went a mile without meeting with some habitation already old, and some new plantation. Before arriving at Christian bridge, situated about forty miles from Dover, I passed through several little towns, very well peopled. Christian bridge lies upon a height, at the bottom of which runs a small river that falls into the Delaware.

Upon entering a very cleanly inn that had been pointed out to me, the master of the house, whom, with much difficulty I succeeded in awaking, the night being advanced, informed me, that he



could give me no lodging, his house being entirely occupied by French travellers.

Thinking it impossible that any of my shipwrecked companions should have thus got on before me, I went straight into the room of these Frenchmen, roused them, and recognized with as much surprise as pleasure, the Marquis de Champcenetz, aide-de-camp to M. de Vioménil.

This officer, at the time we quitted our frigates, had consented, at the urgent request of M. de la Touche, to remain on board *l'Aigle*. M. de Champcenetz was perfectly acquainted with the English language, and his assistance was of great importance to M. de la Touche, to communicate with the American pilots during the remainder of his perilous voyage.

From him I learned all the details of the disaster, suffered by *l'Aigle*. He informed me that, on the evening of the 14th, just as our frigates found themselves far advanced in the river with only three of the enemy's frigates in pursuit, the depth of the water suddenly diminished, announcing the approach of the insurmountable obstacle predicted by the pilots.

M. de la Touche then declared his wish to cast anchor ; but, at this moment, the corvette, which we had captured, having easily surmounted the fatal impediment of the sand bank which shut up the channel, the captain gave orders for *la Gloire* to attempt the same passage ; in which, after many efforts, she also succeeded.

Such good fortune inspired M. de la Touche with some hopes of escaping; but as his ship drew more water than *la Gloire*, she came upon the bank with more violence, and remained fast in the sand, at the same time falling on her side so as totally to deprive her of the use of her cannon, which, from this moment, were discharged only into the air.

It was then, that one of the English frigates, which was sailing in the right channel, took her station athwart the stern of *l'Aigle* and commenced a brisk cannonade, which was only answered by two small guns from the stern, and these were merely fired in order to maintain the honor of our flag.

When the English frigates drew nigh, M. de la Touche cut his masts away, and bored a hole in the bottom of his vessel, sufficient to have sunk her in deeper water. After this operation, during which the enemy's fire redoubled, he ordered M. de Champcenetz to throw himself, with the American pilots and some sailors, into the only boat that remained; and, as soon as the boat had got clear off, *l'Aigle* struck her colours.

The English frigate in the mean while observing the boat rowing away, directed its whole fire at it. The pilot in the utmost alarm wished to surrender, but M. de Champcenetz, with sword in hand, compelled them to sustain the shower of balls, and to pass up the river.

In short, after innumerable dangers, he set foot on land, and had taken up his quarters at the little town where I met him.

He mentioned another misfortune sustained by M. de la Touche ; for, having attempted, previously to his disaster, to parley with the English vessels ; he learnt from them that his mistress and his merchant-man, that had been towed as far as the Azores, after having so unfortunately delayed our voyage, had arrived the same day as ourselves in Delaware bay, where the English had captured both the lady and the vessel.

M. de Champcenetz expressed a wish to accompany me as far as Philadelphia, to which I cheerfully consented, and I resumed my journey with my new companion. After three hours' ride we found ourselves beyond the limits where the Tories were to be dreaded, and we arrived near Wilmington, capital of the district of the Delaware, a well built, commodious, and populous town, and which, from the great number of its shops, appeared a place of considerable commercial activity. I took up my quarters with an American colonel who received us very courteously, and supplied us with good horses.

Thence we set out for Chester, where we arrived in time for dinner, at an inn bearing the sign of *General Washington* : for in all the towns of this grateful republic, we, every where, met with the name of Washington ; and it was engraven on all hearts. Our hostess being well disposed towards the French, redoubled her attention and regard for me, when she learned that I was the friend and uncle of M. de La Fayette.

Chester is a very rich and commercial town.

Its situation upon the Delaware commands a delightful prospect, and the elegance of the houses seems to announce the approach to a capital. All vessels that navigate the river Delaware, touch at the port of Chester before they proceed to the city of Philadelphia.

Having speedily resumed my route, I felt much regret in passing near the scene of the battle of Brandy-Wine without being able to visit it. But, charged as I was with despatches from my father to M. de Rochambeau, from M. de Castries to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, and from M. de Vioménil for M. de la Luzerne, it was impossible for me to delay my journey.

In drawing near Philadelphia I could not help admiring, upon passing over Chester bridge, the grand horizon of which it forms the centre, as well as the pleasing sites and varied perspectives which appear along the course of the river.

A few minutes afterwards I was met by M. de la Luzerne. This minister, being recently informed of the arrival of our frigates in the Delaware, was desirous of reaching Dover, in order to find M. de Vioménil; he received me with the most cordial and obliging politeness, sympathized in our misfortunes, regretted the loss of *l'Aigle*, and was a little amused at my wretched equipage, which was truly not a little ridiculous. He gave me a seat in his carriage, and returned with me to Philadelphia.

I arrived in that city with the hope of reposing for at least a week after my labors; but here, as here-

tofore, I was again destined to suffer disappointment. For fortune had apparently decided that, as a soldier, I was to serve a long campaign without battles; that, being a land officer, I should be present only in a naval engagement; that, in going to meet the enemy, I should find him retreating, and shut up in the most inaccessible fortresses; and that, as a traveller, I should be compelled to be always running from one place to another, from north to south, and from the frozen to the torrid zone, without ever having it in my power to stay at any of the places most calculated to excite my curiosity.

Thus I had hardly four-and-twenty hours to employ in observing the town, which was, at that time, the capital of the United States, and the residence of their government. At the sight of Philadelphia it was not difficult to predict the great and prosperous destinies of America.

This city, the name of which signifies the *city of brothers*, is situated upon the east side of the river Delaware, at the distance of two short leagues from its confluence with the Schuylkill. It then contained one hundred thousand inhabitants; its streets are sixty feet broad, and laid down with great precision; while its commodious footways and the simple elegance and neatness of its houses, agreeably strike the eye, notwithstanding the irregularity of the different little quays which every merchant has constructed, after his own taste, upon the banks of the river, at the door of his own store, with openings to place his vessels out of the reach of the ice on

the breaking up of the river. This part is low, wet and unwholesome.

William Penn, the founder of this city, had projected to build it on a regular and extensive plan. The dreams of that excellent man had as short a duration as those of many great politicians ; but his name will endure for ever, for he was the only European who founded a government in America upon moral principles, and who did not cement it with the blood of the unfortunate inhabitants of this hemisphere.

This simple, moral and pacific sect, that of the *friends*, whom many have vainly attempted to ridicule, by denominating them *quakers* or *shakers*, still exists as a memorial of the only society which, perhaps, ever professed or practised evangelical morality and christian charity in all their purity and simplicity without any alloy or any degree of prejudice. Even the necessity of self-defence could not compel them to shed blood, nor could their interest ever induce them to profane the name of the Deity by an oath.

Others have, at all times, had the language of philosophy in their mouths ; but these men only have lived and continue to live like true sages. In spite, therefore, of the ironical contempt with which they are generally spoken of, even in the country [which of right belonged to them, and of whose government they were deprived, I have never either seen or listened to them without a feeling of respect.

I am well aware that, attached to our own customs, we may at first, perhaps, be a little

shocked at theirs, and feel inclined to tax them with affectation, because they walk into a room with their hats upon their heads, and never speak without *thouing* us. Their apparel also, though neat, is apt to strike us as too plain and rustic, while that of the women, if it were black, would resemble, with their stomachers, the dress of our sisters *de la charité*. These severe forms, however, which are prescribed to them, contribute, perhaps, more than is supposed, to the preservation of their morals.

Very strict towards themselves, yet no persons carry toleration further than they do. Although war is considered a great crime in their eyes, and they detest the military profession, they know how to confer great praises upon warriors who are sparing of human blood, and unite virtue to valor.

Thus, one of the most famous of their sect came to wait upon General the Count de Rochambeau, when upon his way to Philadelphia, and addressed him in the following harangue: “ Friend, thou dost practise a vile trade; but  
“ we are told that thou dost conduct thyself with  
“ all the humanity and justice that it will admit  
“ of: I am very glad of this; I feel indebted to  
“ thee for it, and I am come hither to see thee  
“ and to assure thee of my esteem.”

Another quaker of very general reputation, named Mr. Benezet, said to General the Chevalier de Chastellux: “ I know thou art a man of  
“ letters, and a member of the French academy.  
“ These literary men have, of late, written many

“ good things : they have, in particular, attacked  
“ errors, prejudice and intolerance ; will they  
“ never attempt to give mankind a disgust for  
“ war, and teach them to live together like  
“ friends and brethren ?”

The detractors of this philanthropic sect being unable to attack their charity or the simplicity of their manners, were reduced to point their shafts at their enthusiasm, and their pretended inspirations. They likewise maintained that their interest occasionally led them to sacrifice something of the severity of their doctrine. “ The  
“ principles of the quakers,” they observed, “ absolutely prohibit them from taking any share,  
“ direct or indirect, in war, which they assert  
“ is a great crime. Consequently, they refuse  
“ to pay any of the taxes levied by Congress,  
“ for the support of the American army ; but as  
“ they wish, at the same time, to avoid the penalties to which they might expose themselves by  
“ such an act of disobedience, every quaker takes  
“ care to put into a purse the exact sum that is  
“ required of him, and to place it openly upon a  
“ desk or in an open drawer, in his house, in  
“ such a way that, when the agents of authority  
“ call upon him, he does not, indeed, give them  
“ the sum imposed by the war-tax, but he permits  
“ them to take it.”

One is here tempted, I must confess, to imagine that some travelling jesuit must have pointed out to them this ingenious stratagem, in order to satisfy their conscience without literally violating their sectarian rule.



The aversion, moreover, expressed by the quakers towards war, naturally inclining them not to participate in the spirit of insurrection against the mother country, the greater part of them were tories, a circumstance that fully explains the unjust severity with which they were judged the American patriots.

The city of Philadelphia, at the period of which I speak, was remarkable only for its great extent, for its regularity, and for the prosperity of its population. There were neither public walks nor gardens ; and the most imposing edifices were the Hospital, the Town-Hall, the Prison and Christ's Church. The State House contains large halls, in which the first Congress held its sittings and proclaimed American independence.

It is not, then, the architectural beauties of the monuments belonging to this city, but the great recollections, connected with them, which attract curiosity and command respect. The whole town is one noble temple, raised to the spirit of toleration ; for it is there we behold catholics, presbyterians, calvinists, lutherans, unitarians, anabaptists, methodists and quakers, all in great number, and each professing their form of worship at full liberty, and living with each other in perfect amity.

I examined, with care, the state of the fortifications in this place, as well as the means that had been adopted for the defence of the Delaware, a river that will not admit even the smallest vessels of war further than Trenton ; but observations like these, however important at a period when

three millions of Americans, divided among themselves, were engaged in a struggle with the colossal forces of Great Britain, have ceased to interest us now.

But America, in the possession of freedom for the last forty years, flourishing under the protection of wise laws, powerful in a population of ten millions inhabitants, by all of whom it would be defended, in time of need, and already exhibiting a respectable naval force, to the astonishment of all Europe, is no longer in a situation to dread a rash invasion of her shores, the flag of an enemy upon her rivers, or an army beleaguering her towns.

The Chevalier de la Luzerne, minister plenipotentiary from our court, in whose house I resided, gave me, in a few short conversations, a better insight into the situation of affairs, the nature of the institutions, the force of the parties, and the future prospects of America, than I could have acquired in a long journey, or by the most painful research. M. de la Luzerne, with much information and wit, united the most unblemished integrity and uncommon sagacity.

The world has not sufficiently appreciated the services rendered by his steady wisdom and by the ability and prudence of the Count de Rochambeau to the noble cause which we then supported ; at a crisis when it required every effort to reanimate the courage of the Americans, dispirited by a succession of reverses, to allay their discontent, caused by the delay of the aid we had promised them, to unite all minds, to maintain concord,

to obviate all misunderstanding and jealousy between France and her allies, and, by an active co-operation, to promote the success of those grand enterprizes so widely combined, and whose happy results established the fortunes of the new republic, by depriving the English of all hope of destroying its independence. Posterity, doubtless, more just, will render homage, as it ought, to two characters so useful to their country, and thus indemnify them for the neglect of their contemporaries.

M. de Marbois, now a peer of France, was then consul and counsellor to the embassy of M. de la Luzerne, whom he assisted in his labors. He had previously been chargé-d'affaires at Ratisbon, at Dresden and at Munich. To him we are indebted for a curious tract on Arnold's conspiracy, an historical sketch, which bears the stamp of the best writers of antiquity.

After the triumph of the United States, M. de Marbois, being appointed agent at St. Domingo, restored order to that colony. On his return to France he was sent upon a mission to Vienna, by Louis XVI. Escaping the tyranny of the convention, he was made a member of the *Conseil des anciens*; and, being proscribed and exiled by the directory, he languished, for many years, at Cayenne upon an unwholesome soil where nearly all his companions in misfortune perished.

Upon being recalled home, he became minister to Napoleon; was honored with the same degree of confidence by Louis XVIII; and, still active, at

an age when most men are worn out, he lives to adorn, both by his intelligence and by his probity, the *Cour des comptes* over which he presides, and the Chamber of Peers in which he holds his seat.

On the very morning of my arrival, M. de la Luzerne introduced me to the most distinguished persons in the city; to M. Morisse who, by his sole credit, sustained the almost extinguished financial credit of the state, restored the public prosperity by his intelligence, and lost his own fortune by subsequent speculations of an hazardous nature; to M. Lincoln, minister of war, who conferred great services upon his country, both as a soldier and a statesman; and to M. Lewington, the minister for foreign affairs, who enjoyed a high reputation.

I had likewise, the pleasure of seeing several ladies, well worth admiration, no less for their virtues as mothers of families, than for the social charms of their conversation. Without pretending to the grace of our countrywomen, they had a peculiar grace of their own, which was by no means less attractive on account of its simplicity.

Desire of rest, curiosity, and the obliging attention of my host, all combined to invite me to a longer stay at Philadelphia. Hardly, however, had I enjoyed a few hours' repose, seduced by such flattering hopes than an officer, despatched by M. de Vioménil, awakened me by bringing an order for my immediate departure to the northern states, as bearer of the despatches, from our own court, to the Generals Rochambeau and Wash-

ington who, at that time, were encamped near the river Hudson.

I obeyed, disagreeable as it was to undertake so long a journey alone, without servants, luggage, or even change of linen. Just, however, as I was on the point of setting out, one of my own valets, who had just landed from *la Gloire*, came running to inform me that the frigate, and a part of my effects, had been saved. He, however, only brought me a light portmanteau which I placed, as well as my servant, upon my suki, and proceeded on my way, mounted upon a pretty good horse.

It was not without much regret that I was compelled to pass by the famous field of Germantown when the American army, under Washington, proved, by a spirited attack upon the English, with whom it maintained an obstinate combat, that it had not been dismayed by its defeat at Brandy-Wine, and that, although victories might be sometimes gained over America, it was impossible to subdue her.

In all the towns and villages through which I passed, and in all the private houses where I stopped, I observed the same simplicity of manners, the same politeness and hospitality, the same zeal for the common cause, and the same degree of earnestness in providing me with the means of arriving speedily at my place of destination.

Almost every step upon my route I experienced two opposite impressions; one produced by the

spectacle of the beauties of a wild and savage nature ; and the other by the fertility and variety of industrious cultivation and of a civilized world. Sometimes alone amidst vast forests of those magnificent trees, yet sacred from the axe, and some of which, falling only under the weight of ages, exhibit no signs of their past existence except by little hillocks formed by their crumbling trunks ; I was transported back, in imagination, to the age of the first European navigators who set foot upon an unknown world. Sometimes I was lost in admiration of beautiful vallies cultivated with so much care, of meadows covered with numerous flocks, of houses at once neat, elegant, diversified with different colors and embosomed in little gardens very prettily fenced in ; while further on, beyond other large masses of wood, rose populous villages and towns which brought back ideas of civilization brought to perfection, with their schools, their temples and their universities. Indigence and brutality were no where to be seen ; fertility, comfort and kindness were every where to be found ; and every individual displayed the modest and tranquil pride of an independent man, who feels that he has nothing above him but the laws, and who is a stranger alike to the vanity, to the prejudices and to the servility of European society. Such is the picture that, during the whole of my route, surprized and rivetted my attention.

There no useful profession is ever ridiculed or despised, and though unequal in point of situation, all men preserve equal right. Indolence

alone would be a subject of reproach. Military ranks and offices prevent no one from following some profession. All there are either merchants, agriculturists or artisans ; the most indigent are domestics, workmen, or sailors ; far from resembling men of the inferior classes in Europe, these fully deserve the regard that is shewn to them, and which they exact by the decency of their language and their conduct.

At first, I was rather surprised, on entering an inn, to find that it belonged to a captain, a major, or a colonel, who conversed equally well upon his campaigns against the English, upon the clearing of his lands, and the sale of his fruits and his provisions.

I was still more astonished, when upon replying to some questions put to me respecting my family, and informing them that my father was a general and a minister, my interrogators inquired what was his profession or trade ?

I every where met with convenient apartments, well supplied tables, abundant good cheer, but at the same time simple and wholesome. The beverage, to be sure, was a little too strong with rum and cinnamon, and the coffee too weak, but the tea excellent. There were only two things which shocked me more than I can express, one a vile custom, the moment a toast was given, of circulating an immense bowl of punch round the table, out of which each guest was successively compelled to drink ; and the other was that, after being in bed, it was not unusual to see a fresh

traveller walk into your room, and without ceremony, stretch himself by your side, and appropriate a part of your couch. I was somewhat rebellious upon this latter point, and without much difficulty, obtained an exemption from the general rule.

I remained only a few hours at the pretty towns of Trenton and of Princetown, which I would willingly have examined more in detail. Both of them recalled glorious recollections of the brilliant exploits of Washington, of La Fayette and a great number of heroic men who had compelled the English, in spite of their tactics and their number, to respect the rebel people whom they had so unjustly affected to despise, and to acknowledge that an ardent love of genuine liberty is of all species of power the most formidable.

About three leagues from Pompton, I was very nearly falling, by a strange mistake, with all my despatches, into the hands of our enemies, which would have been a singular and unlucky commencement of my new career. The French army, only a little before, had traversed the same route that I was now pursuing, and this line of march was still marked out with stakes, for the convenience of the sick, the stragglers, and the baggage waggons, which in so long a march had been left some way behind.

I had a single servant with me, and no guide ; at a division of the roads, there were some stakes placed in a direction to the east, either owing to



a mistake or perfidy, which had the effect of deceiving me, by leading me out of my right path.

After having travelled several hours, I began to be surprized at not reaching Pompton ; at length I perceived a solitary dwelling, at the gate of which I observed an old woman sitting at her spinning wheel. On approaching her, I inquired whether I was far from Pompton. She laughed as she replied : “ You are not in the right way ; “ and you are about six leagues from Elisabeth- “ town, where you will find a regiment of English “ dragoons.”

On hearing these words, I turned round, as may be supposed, pretty briskly, and retraced my steps, happy at having thus avoided so serious a misfortune and the English patroles ; but I was not able to reach Pompton until very late at night.

At a short distance from it, I fell in with a poor French lieutenant, belonging to the infantry, who had been on the sick list, and was travelling on foot. As he appeared quite worn down by fatigue, I invited him to take a seat upon my *suki*.

All the inns at Pompton were filled with travellers ; and in the last where I applied I was informed that all the rooms were occupied by one of the commissaries of our army. I determined to request him to accommodate me with a part of them, but the foolish vanity of this gentleman produced a somewhat ludicrous dialogue between us.

The officer whom I had brought along with me,

presented no very imposing appearance with his pale face and his dress covered with dust. As to me, I had only a plain white riding coat over my clothes, which bore no mark of rank.

The commissary received us very uncivilly : he did not even rise, while he answered, that we might look out for accommodations elsewhere, as he had no room for us.

As I was replying to him rather warmly, one end of my epaulette happened to be seen through my riding coat, and this seemed to soften his tone, though without abating any thing of his haughtiness.

“ I am sorry,” he said, “ that I cannot give you a better reception, but my clerks and myself are only barely supplied with what is necessary. About a mile out of town, you will find, I believe, a tavern where you will meet with accommodations.”

“ This alternative,” replied I, “ would prove rather fatiguing after so long a journey, and particularly to this poor sick officer, whom I, as a colonel, felt bound to treat with a little more civility, than you seem inclined to do.”

The word *colonel* produced a sudden change in our commissary's countenance, he stammered out some excuses, but persisting in his obstinacy, he offered to make room for me in his own apartments, and to accompany my officer to the tavern at some distance, which he had pointed out to me.

No longer repressing the anger I then felt : “ Upon my word, Sir,” I exclaimed, “ this is

“ not to be borne. You have shewn yourself  
 “ perfectly unfeeling towards fellow countrymen  
 “ whom you supposed your inferiors, rather pert  
 “ towards two officers, and not very respectful  
 “ before a colonel, you deserve then to be  
 “ punished. I, Sir, am a colonel, and son to the  
 “ minister of war. There is only one chance  
 “ left to you of preventing me from reporting  
 “ the insolence of your conduct to M. de Ro-  
 “ chambeau : I only asked of you one of your  
 “ rooms, but now I will have them all. So march  
 “ hence with your clerks as fast as possible, and  
 “ find another lodging.”

As servile now, as he had before been haughty,  
 the commissary obeyed without a murmur. My  
 poor officer, in consequence, got into excellent  
 quarters and a good bed ; and thus ended this little  
 comic adventure.

Shortly after, I arrived on the banks of the  
 river Hudson, at Stoney-Point, a commanding  
 and important post, where the French major  
 Fleury greatly distinguished himself, when the  
 Americans carried it by assault.

We can form no idea in Europe of a river so  
 broad and magnificent as river Hudson. It is na-  
 vigated by ships of war ; and is, in fact, a sea flow-  
 ing between two forests, the growth of ages whose  
 imposing aspect inclines the mind of the travel-  
 ler to indulge in deep meditation.

Having crossed this river at a place called King's  
 Ferry, I beheld, a few hours afterwards with in-  
 describable pleasure, the tents of the American

camp; I traversed it; and, after proceeding some miles, I arrived at Piskill on the 26th of September, in the head quarters of General Rochambeau. I delivered to him my father's despatches, as well as those of M. de Vioménil; and this excellent man, receiving me with the utmost tenderness, treated me as if I had been his own son.

After discharging this my first duty, I hastened to the quarters of the regiment of Soissonnais under the command of the Count de Saint-Maime, who subsequently took the name of Count de Muy, made many brilliant campaigns in the wars of the revolution, and upon the restoration, was appointed member of the chamber of Peers.

The regiment being under arms, I was received, according to military custom, as its Lieutenant-Colonel, and I experienced a warmer greeting on account of my name which inspired the soldiers with glorious recollections; for by a singular chance the regiment of Soissonnais, formerly called the regiment of Ségur, had essentially contributed to the victories of Lawfeld and of Rocoux. My father, at that time, commanded them, and it was, while marching at their head, that he received a ball through the breast, in one of those brilliant actions, and in another a musquet shot that shattered his arm. The same soldiers were not in existence; but this military story had become traditionary, and they received me less as an ordinary commander than as an *enfant du corps*.

One of the old officers was even so obliging as to repeat before all his comrades, the lines con-

tained in one of Voltaire's epistles addressed to the Duchess du Maine, upon the victory of Lawfeld in 1747.

Having reached the shore in the condition of a shipwrecked man, bringing with me only my uniform and my sword, the Count de Saint Maimé, like a true fellow soldier, frankly divided with me every thing that he possessed. To him I was indebted for my equipage and tent; we had the same table, to which we invited daily, during the rest of the campaign, the different officers of our corps; who, in their long marches from north to south, and from south to north, through the United States, had worn out the whole of their simple equipments.

Having found the combined armies near New-York, I had flattered myself that we were about to undertake the siege of that important place; but in this hope I was disappointed. A few days afterwards, we proceeded to occupy another position,—that of Crampont, between the river of the North, and that of Croton. There I first entered upon my own establishments; my servants, and my equipage, that had been landed from *la Gloire*, arriving very seasonably, to efface the remembrance of my unfortunate entrance into the Delaware.

The life we lead in a camp, when not in contact with the enemy, is at once an active and idle one, and very agreeable to many, who are thus enabled to kill time without employing it, and

undergo much fatigue, without doing any thing. Young soldiers, who are previously well informed, there forget all they have learned, and learn nothing of which they were before ignorant. Accustomed to employment, and far from having enough leisure for it, I was obliged, after the duties of the field, to hasten to the quarters of all our generals, in succession, at a considerable distance from each other, or to receive all visitors at my tent; for we have no keys to the latter, and the importunity of idlers knows no bounds. Indeed, I was never free until night, and it was then only, that I enjoyed a few pleasant hours, in reading and in thinking.

The grenadiers of the regiment of Soissonnais, gave me a proof of their attachment as affecting as it was new, and of which I still retain a pleasing recollection. Taking advantage of a day when I was upon duty, being sent to reconnoitre, they exerted themselves in concert with such activity, that, on my return to the camp, about night-fall, I found the round tent that served for my cabinet, illuminated, and decorated with wreaths of flowers, while, in the interior, there was fixed a small chimney, very neatly constructed, a kind of inlaid floor equally well made, with large shelves attached to the sides of the tent, upon which all my books were arranged in order. These brave fellows seemed to enjoy my surprise, and when I turned to thank them, they replied: "You  
" always share our labors so cheerfully, that it is  
" a pleasure to us to contribute to yours, we wish

“ to express how highly we regard a leader who  
“ consults our wants, and who loves us.”

I took advantage of a few days leisure to visit West-Point Fort, taking a single companion with me, M. Duplessis-Mauduit, an officer of artillery, who had distinguished himself by several intrepid actions, which the bravest among the Romans would not have scrupled to avow.

The originality of his character was as remarkable as his valor. Happening, when young, to engage in a dispute, upon the actual position of the Athenian and Persian armies at the battle of Plataea, on which the parties had bet a crown, and being at once indigent and obstinate, he was desirous of ascertaining the fact, without ruining himself, for which purpose he undertook and actually accomplished a journey to Greece, on foot !

He was always observed to be foremost while in America, in all attacks,—the first in every assault, and the last during a retreat. Being one day charged to reconnoitre the entrenched camp of the enemy, he boldly ventured to approach alone, under shelter of the night ; he crept upon his face to the very foot of the palisades, of which he removed several, and only returned to the American camp, after having penetrated into the English entrenchments, which he was sent to reconnoitre.

This officer carried his attachment to liberty and equality to an excess; he was displeased when any one called him *Sir*, or *Mr.* and desired that he might simply be named Thomas Duplessis-

Mauduit. His career was short, and his end an unhappy one ; for being employed at St. Domingo, he threw himself among a party of revolvers, and was assassinated by the negroes, whose fury he attempted to repress.

The fortress of West-Point, situated upon a steep hill, at the foot of which ran the North, or Hudson river, was doubly fortified by nature and by art, so as to be considered impregnable. It was this important post, justly regarded as the key of the United States, which the traitor Arnold, attempted to betray into the hands of the English.

After the discovery of his treason and his flight, the command of the place had been confided to General Knox, formerly a bookseller, and who rose to the highest distinction by his rare merit ; being one of the most intelligent and brave among the American officers. He received me very cordially, and explained to me all his means of defence. I met with few men, during my travels, whose conversation was at once more instructive and entertaining.

At West-Point, more than at any other place, we are struck with the aspect of the North River, which is a whole league in breadth, and navigable as far as Albany, by ships of war. It flows between two chains of mountains, at that time uninhabited, and covered with pine, ancient oaks and black cypress.

This wild and savage prospect, awakened many sad and solemn thoughts, such as might, in the language of the present day, be termed romantic.



These feelings were heightened by the conversation of Mauduit, who recalled to mind, the various events of which this place had been the theatre, and all the battles that had been fought there, during the last five years, between liberty and her formidable enemies.

I must confess that, in contemplating those gigantic masses of rocks, unfathomed abysses, and immense forests, I was at a loss to imagine how the English had so long retained the chimerical hope of subjugating a people defended by such insurmountable barriers, and inspired with the love of independence.

After returning from this interesting journey, I went to the camp at Crampont. We continued, during some weeks, occupied only in visiting the posts, in reconnoitring, in repeated exercises, and in all the regular duties of the profession.

The sole compensation I derived from this state of inaction, was in the interesting conversations I held with all those who, in our own, or the American army, had most contributed to the success of the war, and who could best inform me respecting the institutions of the country, the causes of the revolution, its progress, its difficulties, and, finally, every thing that my eager curiosity had so long impelled me to study closely, and examine with the utmost attention.

I was very fortunately assisted in my researches by the Chevalier de Chastellux, an amiable and enlightened character, my father's intimate friend, and one of my near relations. The name of this intelligent academician, this distinguished gene-

ral officer, whose learning was devoid of presumption, and who united all the merit of sound erudition to the charm of a pure and correct style, is still held in veneration throughout America, whose independence he defended with his sword.

Esteemed as his writings are in France, they are still better appreciated elsewhere; his work upon *Public Happiness* bearing even a higher character, and being more relished in foreign parts. This curious work is levelled against many ancient idols; it contains new and important truths, and proves, with equal wit and argument, how much the lot of modern nations, assisted by the light of philosophy, is preferable to that of those heroic people whose brilliancy and grandeur only are held up to the imitation of our deluded youth.

This author, not permitting himself to be dazzled with the meteor of ancient glory, recalls to mind the imperfection and injustice of their laws, which held in bondage, and treated as so many cattle, nineteen-twentieths of the human race; the barbarity of their manners, the frequently cruel absurdity of their religious rites, and their utter ignorance of a number of sciences, geographical, physical, operative, mathematical, theoretic, and practical; all which, diffusing their utility from the extremities of Europe to those of America, are continually carrying civilization to a higher degree of perfection, produce every where order, security, and prosperity, preside over the wonders performed by the arts, alleviate our evils, multiply our enjoyments a hundred fold, establish,

among all people, a rapid communication of information, of ideas, and of the fruits of their labors, and render their barren wastes productive.

These are the sciences that command the elements, that direct and avert the lightening of heaven. With the aid of these, we behold the men of our own times braving the tempests of the ocean, through which they steer their way by means of a floating canvass, the invisible power of the magnet, and the magical force of a concentrated vapor. In short, the author every where presents us with the fortunes of man, dignified, adorned, and improved, by a milder religion, juster laws, wiser institutions, and more enlightened governments.

Let us, then, offer the tribute of a well merited gratitude to the author of *Public Happiness*, who, dissipating the prejudices of the school, has attributed, as they deserve, a higher character to the cities of Paris and of London, than to those of Rome and Athens, which are worthy, indeed, of our admiration under many points of view ; but which, in other respects, do not deserve the servile and enthusiastic worship which has, too long, been paid to them.

One of my most anxious wishes was to see Washington, the hero of America. He was then encamped at a short distance from us, and the Count de Rochambeau was kind enough to introduce me to him. Too often reality disappoints the expectations our imagination had raised, and admiration diminishes by a too near view of the object upon which it had been bestowed ; but, on seeing

General Washington, I found a perfect similarity between the impression produced upon me by his aspect, and the idea I had formed of him.

His exterior disclosed, as it were, the history of his life : simplicity, grandeur, dignity, calmness, goodness, firmness, the attributes of his character, were also stamped upon his features, and in all his person. His stature was noble and elevated ; the expression of his features mild and benevolent ; his smile graceful and pleasing ; his manners simple, without familiarity.

He did not display the luxury of a monarchical general ; every thing announced in him the hero of a republic ; he inspired with, rather than commanded respect, and the expression of all those that surrounded his person manifested the existence in their breasts of feelings of sincere affection, and of that entire confidence in the chief upon whom they seemed exclusively to found all their hopes of safety. His quarters, at a little distance from the camp, offered the image of the order and regularity displayed in the whole tenor of his life, his manner, and conduct.

I had expected to find, in this popular camp, soldiers ill equipped, officers without instruction, republicans destitute of that urbanity so common in our old civilized countries. I recollected the first moment of their revolution, when husbandmen, and artizans, who had never held a gun, had hastened, without order, and in the name of their country, to go and fight the British phalanxes, offering only to the view of their astonished enemies an assemblage of rough and unpolished be-

ings, whose only military insignia consisted of a cap, upon which the word *liberty* was written.

It will, therefore, be easily imagined how much I was surprised at finding an army well disciplined, in which every thing offered the aspect of order, reason, information, and experience. The manners and language of the generals, their aids-de-camp, and the other officers were noble and appropriate, and were heightened by that natural benevolence which appears to me as much preferable to politeness, as a mild countenance is preferable to a mask upon which the utmost labor has been bestowed to render its features graceful.

The personal dignity of each individual, the noble pride with which all were inspired by the love of liberty, and a sentiment of equality, had been no slight obstacles to the elevation of a chief who was to rise above them without exciting their jealousy, and to subject their independent spirit to the rules of discipline without promoting discontent.

Any other man but Washington would have failed in the attempt ; but such were his genius and his wisdom, that, in the midst of the storms of a revolution, he commanded, during seven years, the army of a free nation, without exciting the alarms of his countrymen, or the suspicions of the Congress.

Under every circumstance he united in his favor the suffrages of rich and poor, magistrates and warriors ; in short, Washington is, perhaps, the only man who ever conducted and terminated a civil war without having drawn upon himself any

deserved censure. As it was known to all that he entirely disregarded his own private interest, and consulted solely the general welfare, he enjoyed, during his life, those unanimous homages which the greatest men generally fail to receive from their contemporaries, and which they must only expect from posterity. It might have been said that envy, seeing him so highly established in public estimation, had become discouraged, and cast away her shafts in despair of their ever being able to reach him.

Washington, when I saw him, was forty-nine years of age. He endeavored modestly to avoid the marks of admiration and respect which were so anxiously offered to him, and yet no man ever knew better how to receive and to acknowledge them. He listened, with an obliging attention, to all those who addressed him, and the expression of his countenance had conveyed his answer before he spoke.

When very young he commenced his military career by fighting against the French on the frontiers of Canada, at the head of the Virginian militia; and, after his return from this campaign, that man, who was destined to act so prominent a part in his country, remained, for a considerable time, at home, in a state of inactivity, appearing to prefer a quiet philosophical life to the agitations of public affairs.

Exempt from ambition, he interfered but little in the events that marked the first steps of the American insurrection; but, as soon as war was irrevocably declared, as the state and the army

were in want of a chief, all eyes were turned upon Washington, who was universally esteemed for his wisdom. In a country, besides, in which peace had subsisted for so long a period, he was then, perhaps, the only man having some notion and some recollection of war.

Inspired with the purest and most disinterested love for his country, he refused to receive the salary assigned to him as general-in chief, and it was almost in spite of him that the state undertook to defray the cost of his table. That table was, every day, prepared for thirty guests, and the dinner which, according to the custom of the English and of the Americans, lasted several hours, was concluded by numerous toasts. Those most generally given were—"The independence of the United States"—"The King and Queen of France"—"Success to the Allied Armies." After these came private toasts, or, as they were called in America, "sentiments." In general, after the table had been cleared, and nothing was left but bottles and cheese, the company still remained seated round it until night. Temperance was, however, one of Washington's virtues; and, in thus protracting the duration of his repast, he had only one object in view; the pleasure of conversation, which afforded a diversion from his cares, and repose from his fatigues.

When I dined at the table of this illustrious general, of all the warlike guests it assembled, General Gates was most particularly to me an object of lively curiosity. It is known that he the first had the glory of defeating an English army,

and of obliging it to pass under the yoke. That army, as well as its commander, General Burgoyne, defiled before Gates, and laid down its arms at his feet.

Gates, by his virtues and his courage, had deserved that favor of fortune, but he was unable to fix her ; in a short time afterwards he was beaten at Campden, not through his own fault, but owing to the desertion of some American militia, who ran away. Having been accused before the Congress, the decision of his fate was submitted to Washington, his rival in glory, and between whom and himself some feelings of jealousy subsisted.

Washington, who had, at first, manifested some sympathy in favor of Gates, showed himself severe as a judge, at the moment when indulgence would have contributed to heighten his glory ; but entire perfection does not fall to the lot of humanity. Gates was dismissed from the service, and the command of his army was given to the brave and celebrated General Green.

Men of an elevated turn of mind dignify their misfortunes by the courage with which they bear them. That displayed by Gates was heroic and worthy of him ; he declared that, although he was deprived of the honor of commanding, his firm resolution was to continue to shed his blood, in the capacity of a soldier, for the defence of his country as long as the war for its independence should last, and he repaired, with a noble confidence, to the tent of Washington. Their first interview, which was public, was expected with



anxious curiosity. The decorum, dictated by a generous courtesy, marked the conduct of both parties on this occasion ; and both, though placed in situations widely different, preserved a modest dignity of deportment. From that moment their quarrels ceased, and Washington restored to Gates the confidence and the honors he so justly deserved.

General Washington received me with great kindness. He spoke to me of the gratitude which his country would ever retain for the King of France and for his generous assistance ; highly extolled the wisdom and skill of General Count de Rochambeau, expressing himself honored by having deserved and obtained his friendship ; warmly commended the bravery and discipline of our army ; and concluded by speaking to me, in very obliging and handsome terms, of my father whose long services and numerous wounds were becoming ornaments, he said, to a minister of war.

We were continually in hopes that the English, ashamed of their inactivity, would cease to remain shut up in their intrenchments of New York and would leave them to come and engage us. But, disheartened by their reverses, they did not move and contented themselves with blockading the ports, as much as they could, in order to intercept the reinforcements and the news we expected from Europe.

Our impatience, to measure our strength with the enemy's, was seconded by the Baron de Vio-

ménil whose temper was impetuous and who possessed a most daring courage. He strenuously urged an attack upon New York by our combined armies, but the strong and steep position of that place, its numerous intrenchments defended by strong batteries, the succour and supplies it constantly received by sea, and lastly the impossibility of investing it on all sides, would have been, of themselves, sufficient reasons to deter General Washington and Count de Rochambeau from hazarding an attempt which would have cost so many lives without necessity at a moment when the English, to all appearance, acknowledging themselves beaten, evidently proved that they had abandoned all hope of depriving the United States of their independence.

Besides the orders I had brought to Count de Rochambeau had prescribed to him the adoption of another plan which was to be carried into effect, unless unforeseen circumstances should prevent its execution; and, as will be seen hereafter, it was in the Antilles that our government intended to strike the decisive blows, which were to compel England to put an end to the sanguinary contest and conclude peace.

The French camp, at Crampont, was situated fifteen miles or five leagues from the American camp. We remained there three weeks, at the end of which a report began to prevail in the army, that we should soon leave the United States and embark, at Boston, upon a squadron commanded by M. de Vaudreuil. This separation chagrined

extremely Washington and the American army ; but the results of this measure, and the speedy peace it led to, fully manifested, the following year, the wisdom of the plan conceived by the French ministers.

On the 22nd of October we commenced our march, and, at the end of a week, arrived in the plain of Harford, one of the largest towns of Connecticut. We remained there four days, and there M. de Rochambeau communicated to us officially, that, unless an unexpected movement of the English should counteract his design, he intended to return immediately to France with a part of his staff, and that we should be, henceforth, under the orders of the Baron de Vioménil.

We also heard, at the same time, that the squadron of M. Vaudreuil was not yet ready to receive us, and that this officer only wished us to arrive at Boston when he should have completed his preparations. We thus found ourselves compelled to remain a long while encamped, and afterwards to perform laborious marches during a season the inclemency of which already begun prematurely and rather sharply to manifest itself, as the snow was falling in abundance like in winter.

On the 4th of November the army set out for Providence, and, as we were at some distance from the camp and our presence was not indispensable, the Prince de Broglie and myself asked M. de Rochambeau's permission to make an excursion to New-London, a spot rendered memo-

rable by the perfidious and sanguinary acts of vengeance committed by Arnold, and to visit also Rhode-Island where our troops had so long been stationed before they began their glorious campaign. MM. de Vauban, de Champcenetz, de Chabannes, and Bozon de Talleyrand-Perigord accompanied us in this little trip.

The country we passed through offered, to our view, varied and rich prospects, a population numerous, active, industrious and finding the reward of its labors in the prosperity it enjoyed; every where a soil well cultivated, streets regular and clean houses, towns that were soon to become cities, and villages which already resembled small towns.

The position of New-London upon the Thames, at about a quarter of a mile from the mouth of that river, where it flows into the sea, had rendered it, we were told, a place of considerable trade and very rich; but, when we saw it, the traitor Arnold had burnt and destroyed it, and we walked upon the remaining fragments of its stores and houses which the fire had consumed. The two banks of the Thames were defended by two forts, one of which still appeared in tolerably good condition and contained a sufficient quantity of artillery.

We afterwards set off for Newport and journeyed fifty miles upon a road in a shocking condition. This was the first bad road I had met with in the United States. After having passed two ferries, of which the second separates Rhode-Is-

land from the continent, we arrived in that island. I was destined, on every occasion, to meet with perils by water whilst I vainly sought to encounter them by land: our boat struck violently and was on the point of being upset; prompt assistance, however, soon extricated us from our perilous situation.

On seeing Newport it was easy to understand the regret felt by the French army on quitting that pretty town where it had so long sojourned. Other parts of America were only beautiful by anticipation, but the prosperity of Rhode-Island was already complete; industry, cultivation, activity of trade were all carried to great perfection.

Newport, well and regularly built, contained a numerous population whose happiness was indicated by its prosperity. It offered delightful circles composed of enlightened and modest men and of handsome women, whose talents heightened their personal attractions. All the French officers, who knew them, recollect the names and beauty of Miss Champlain, the two Misses Hunters and of several others.

Like the remainder of my companions, I rendered them the homage to which they were justly entitled; but my longest visits were paid to an old man very silent, who very seldom bared his thoughts and never bared his head. His gravity and monosyllabic conversation announced, at first sight, that he was a quaker. It must however be confessed that, in spite of all the veneration I felt for his virtue, our first interview would

probably have been our last, had I not seen the door of the drawing-room suddenly opened, and a being, which resembled a nymph rather than a woman, enter the apartment. So much beauty, so much simplicity, so much elegance and so much modesty were perhaps never before combined in the same person. It was Polly Leiton, the daughter of my grave quaker. Her gown was white, like herself, whilst her ample muslin neckerchief and the envious cambric of her cap, which scarcely allowed me to see her light-colored hair, and the modest attire in short, of a pious virgin, seemed vainly to endeavor to conceal the most graceful figure and the most beautiful forms imaginable.

Her eyes seemed to reflect, as in a mirror, the meekness and purity of her mind and the goodness of her heart; she received us with an open ingenuity which delighted me, and the use of the familiar word *thou*, which the rules of her sect prescribed, gave to our new acquaintance the appearance of an old friendship.

In our conversations she excited my surprise by the candor full of originality of her questions: "Thou hast then," she said, "neither wife nor children in Europe, since thou leavest thy country and comest so far to engage in that cruel occupation war?"

"But it is for your welfare," I replied, "that I quit all I hold dear, and it is to defend your liberty that I come to fight the English."

"The English," she rejoined, "have done

“ thee no harm, and wherefore shouldst thou  
“ care about our liberty? We ought never to  
“ interfere in other people’s business unless it be  
“ to reconcile them together and prevent the  
“ effusion of blood.”

“ But,” said I, “ my King has ordered me to  
“ come here and engage his enemies and your  
“ own.”—“ Thy King then, orders thee to do a  
“ thing which is unjust, inhuman, and contrary  
“ to what thy God ordereth. Thou shouldst obey  
“ thy God and disobey thy King, for he is King  
“ to preserve and not to destroy. I am sure that  
“ thy wife, if she have a good heart, is of my  
“ opinion.”

What could I reply to that angel? For, in truth, I was tempted to believe that she was a celestial being. Certain it is that, if I had not then been married and happy, I should, whilst coming to defend the liberty of the Americans, have lost my own at the feet of Polly Leiton.

The impression produced upon me by this charming girl was so different from what is experienced in the gay vortex of the world that, as a natural consequence, it diverted my mind, at least for a time, from all idea of concerts, *fêtes* and balls.

However, as the ladies of Newport had acquired strong claims upon our gratitude by the kind reception they had honored us with, and by the favorable opinion they expressed of our companions in arms, whose absence they deeply regretted, we resolved to give them a magnificent

ball and supper, a step not dictated by absolute prudence, since we were only seven or eight officers ten leagues distant from our army.

Long-Island, which was occupied by our enemies, was not far from Newport; and we were told that English pirates sometimes made their appearance on the coast; such being the case and the report of our *fête* having got abroad, they might have paid us a visit and rather strangely disturbed our jovial party. This apprehension, however, appeared to us quite unfounded, and I quickly sent for some musicians belonging to the regiment of Soissonnais. Désoteux, who since acquired some celebrity during our revolution, as a leader of *chouans*, under the name of Comartin, took upon himself, assisted by Vauban, to make the necessary preparations for the ball and supper, whilst we went about the town distributing our invitations.

This little *fête* was one of the prettiest I have ever witnessed; it was adorned by beauty, and cordiality presided over the reception and entertainment of the guests; but Polly Leiton could not be present, and I cannot deny that this circumstance occasionally cast a gloom over my spirits.

Time glided on so agreeably at Newport, that we were not anxious to hasten our return to our tents, and relying upon the indulgence of our general, we exceeded by a few days the leave of absence he had given us. But M. de Rochambeau, who knew all the importance of



a strict adherence to discipline, despatched positive orders for us to join immediately our respective regiments ; we therefore reluctantly quitted Newport, and quickly proceeded to our headquarters which were then at Providence.

Providence must now be a large city, and might already, at that time, have been considered a pretty little town. It then only contained three thousand inhabitants ; but all were in easy circumstances which they owed to assiduous labor and active industry. It is situated in the midst of a valley watered by the river Naraganset, which is tolerably wide and navigable. The name of Naraganset recalls to my mind, that, previously to reaching Providence, I had passed through a village or rather an irregular assemblage of miserable huts bearing that name. It contained the last remnants of the savage tribe of the Naragansets who, during several centuries, had enjoyed the undisturbed possession of this province.

Man, in his savage state, shuns the presence of man in a state of civilization, and soon disappears from the soil where the latter begins to appear. Civilization, so far from offering any attractions to the savage, is an intolerable yoke which he abhors. In vain have some children of savage tribes, which had been abandoned by their parents, been carefully brought up and educated in English and American colleges, instructed in the elements of sciences and arts, dressed and fed like Europeans, and made acquainted with all the advantages and comforts of social life ; no sooner had

they attained age and strength sufficient, than they have invariably seized an opportunity to escape, and returned with impatient ardor to their forests and to the cabins of their fathers, there to enjoy the sweets of a turbulent liberty and of a wandering life which they prefer to every thing. No liberty appears to them deserving of that name, if it is shackled by any kind of restraint.

A few individuals of the Naragansets tribe, had, however, from some cause which I do not know, remained in the place of their birth, when their fellow countrymen quitted it. By degrees their village, formerly situated in the midst of thick forests, had been surrounded by cultivated fields, well peopled towns and trading cities, and in the centre of a rich and industrious American province, this poor Indian tribe appeared like a savage *oasis*\*, placed in the midst of the richest prospect of civilization.

These Indians, isolated by their manners in this magnificent frame which surrounded the wretched picture they formed, had preserved an inviolate attachment to the manners, worship, and mode of living of their countrymen. They had made no advances towards improvement, nothing was altered in the miserable construction of their huts and in the shape of their clothes or rather covering; their manners resembled those of their forefathers and they spoke the same language: but their population diminished every year and perhaps no trace of it is left at the present day.

\* The palm tree of the desert.—(*Translator.*)

Our army was encamped on the road to Boston, three miles from Providence. The autumn was like the winter, the cold was sharp and the snow fell in abundance. As we were not yet certain as to the time of our departure which might still be very much protracted, M. de Rochambeau caused barracks to be built for the soldiers, and allowed colonels to lodge in private houses where every one eagerly offered us an asylum.

This permission afforded me the agreeable opportunity of observing, more in detail, the interior of an American family and their mode of living. I was delighted with the simplicity and frank cordiality of my hosts, and with the purity of their morals. Their politeness was the more pleasing, as it was entirely free from ceremoniousness; they were at the same time well informed, and devoid of all affectation; every thing in them was natural, and their pleasures appeared to consist in the discharge of their duties. Wit, with them, was good sense, and reason dictated their language, and presided over their actions. In short, it really must be admitted, that truth and happiness, so far from being totally banished from the earth, as certain morose philosophers pretend, are every where to be met with in America.

Although the instructions received by M. de Rochambeau left him a considerable latitude in their execution, to enable him to meet the exigences of circumstances that could not be foreseen at such a distance from the field of their operation, every thing tended more and more to confirm him

in the resolution of following the plan pointed out by ministers. The intelligence he received on all sides, concurred to prove, that the English, abandoning all hopes of being able to subdue the United States, intended to evacuate Charlestown, to leave a corps of Hessians in New York, and to transport all their forces to the Antilles, in order to defend their own islands and attack ours.

Information previously received, might indeed have induced a belief that general Clinton would attempt some great stroke before he left North America, and would issue from his intrenchments to attack the allied armies. This expectation had caused us to retard our march, in the hopes of giving the English general reason to repent his temerity; but whether he did, or did not from such a plan, the fact is, that he remained prudently shut up within his lines. Nothing, therefore could detain us any longer, and we impatiently awaited the moment when the squadron of M. de Vaudreuil should be ready to receive us on board.

M. de Rochambeau, desirous of proving to the last moment, by his private conduct, as he had done by the great services he had rendered, how anxious he was to secure the affection of the Americans, and be regretted by them, gave several balls and assemblies at Providence, which were attended by all the neighbourhood within ten leagues of that city.

I do not recollect to have seen any where else an assemblage, in which a greater degree of mirth

prevailed without confusion, in which there was a greater number of pretty women, and married people living happily together, a greater proportion of beauty free from coquetry, a more complete mixture of persons of all classes, whose conduct and manners presented an equal degree of decorum, which obliterated all appearance of unpleasant contrast or distinctions. This decorum, and the order and wise liberty which characterised the New Republic, whose happiness was so firmly established from its cradle, were the constant topics of my frequent conversations with the Chevalier de Chastellux.

Every thing in the foundation of these rich colonies, in their revolution and their legislation, exhibited a kind of phenomenon, of which history offers no precedent, and which must be explained by causes widely different from those which have presided over the origin, formation and progressive advancement of every known government.

Without speaking of the nations of antiquity, whose origin is involved in darkness, and whose history in its earliest periods is mixed up with fables and prodigies, it will be sufficient to remark, that almost every modern government has owed its establishment to conquest, its police to military force, its aggrandizement to fortune.

The conquerors, the barbarous destroyers of the Roman empire, whose manners were slowly softened by the adoption of the evangelical worship, created governments, or rather military associations which divided the land amongst them,

and offered, for a considerable period of time, the image of a military aristocracy encamped on the field of its victories.

The higher classes or officers of this aristocracy, oppressing the conquered, and shewing but little respect for their chiefs became great personages, mayors of the palaces, governors and commanders of provinces; judges and magistrates not over submissive, at a later period, dukes, earls, lords, nobles, knights. They assumed all the power attached to royalty, and the bishops, and abbés followed their example, there were as many laws and customs as there were seignories.

In order, however, to put an end to anarchy, this chaos became organized, and gave rise to feudal power. By degrees, in consequence of the hierarchy established by this system, kings seconded by their people, increased and strengthened their power, at the expence of the power of their nobles.

Hence, at last, emerged the monarchical order, such as we now see it established in most of the European states, an order imposing in itself, but necessarily compounded in its composition of the ruins of feudality, and the remains of sacerdotal power.

In this state of things, liberty is ever struggling against regal authority, which concentrates in itself all the power possessed by the ancient seignories; equality is consequently discarded by the recollections or the prejudices of a nobility stripped of its power, but not of its old pretensions, and of its pride; and lastly, tolerance meets almost every

where with opposition, from a religion which is more or less exclusively acknowledged.

In almost every republic of Europe, traces more or less strongly defined of ancient feudal institutions are to be found, and in England aristocracy is still the basis of the legislature. It might even be said, that the aristocracy of England has preserved a greater number of ancient privileges than that of other countries, because it has had the fortunate wisdom of becoming the patron of public liberty, and of uniting with the people against arbitrary power.

This rapid sketch, and a perusal of the history of every country, will be sufficient to demonstrate how impossible it has been, and how difficult it would still be at the present day, to establish there a legislature uniform, simple, equal for all, and to prevent it from wearing the livery, and assuming the motly appearance of ancient manners.

By a surprising effect of chance, the new republic of North America, founded in its origin, not by conquest, but by the transactions of the pacific Penn; has not had to encounter and to overcome any of these obstacles. Its legislators prosecuting their labors in an enlightend age, without being obliged to triumph over a military power; to limit an absolute authority, to strip the clergy of a preponderating religion of its power, a nobility of its privileges, numerous families of their fortunes, and to erect their new edifice over ruins cemented with blood, have been enabled to found their institutions upon the

principles of reason, of complete liberty, and of political equality ; no ancient prejudice, no antiquated chimera came to place itself between them and the light of truth. One single effort, a single war, to shake off the yoke of the mother country, has been sufficient to free them from all restraint ; and their laws, enacted solely with a view to the general interest, have been engraven on minds free from all previous impressions, without having to encounter a spirit of opposition from any class, sect, or party, or from any private interests.

The result of this position, and of all these circumstances, until then unexampled and unheard of, has been the establishment of a form of government as perfect as can issue from the hands of man, of a government whose wisdom is proved by its unceasing and ever increasing prosperity, during half a century.

Already have the advantages of their institutions, been widely disseminated, and they will more and more diffuse a light that will every where assist mankind, in emerging from either the chaos of anarchy, or the darkness in which it is enveloped by despotism ; the benefit derived from their lessons and their experience will, doubtless, have its due operation, and every day proves that it has not been bestowed in vain.

It would however be rash and imprudent, if, instead of culling from these institutions, what may be applicable to each country according to its position, attempts were made to select them as models in ancient civilized countries, where they



could only be established upon wrecks and ruins, and after having overcome an almost invincible degree of resistance.

The European States, besides, surrounded by powerful neighbours, are obliged to be constantly armed, and to maintain numerous troops, a necessity incompatible with the nature and unrestrained liberty of a government like that of the United States.

Every thing concurred, as by miracle, to favor that new legislation, and advantage and assistance were even derived by it, from circumstances which, at the outset, wore an unfavorable aspect. In the first place, the immensity of that part of the American Continent, so far from embarrassing the founders of the republic, marvellously seconded their views ; for that land, the only limits of which, to the west, were the Pacific Ocean, and whose only neighbour was Kamschatka, being inhabited by weak Indian tribes, the civilized Americans could easily secure to themselves, the occupation of an almost unbounded territory.

This circumstance was most favorable to the morals of this new people : a great danger in every country arises from the misery and compulsory inactivity of a numerous class, entirely destitute of all share in the property of the soil ; but in the United States, this evil cannot exist, since there is every where a greater proportion of land than of men, and that all those who can and will work, find means of existence, and even of be-

coming rich, without ever being tempted to have recourse to swindling, theft, murder, or revolt.

It might also have been apprehended, that, as this country had then been inhabited during a century by Europeans of all nations, and who had all brought with them different religions, manners, and habits, it would be found almost impossible, not only to subject them to an uniform system of legislation, but even to induce them to live in peace and concord together.

Experience, however, proved that this apprehension was totally unfounded, for all those who had abandoned their country, to inhabit America, were men persecuted and proscribed in their native land, either on account of their religion, or because they had found themselves implicated in political disturbances, and oppressed by the tyranny of the party by which they had been defeated.

Such were the motives which induced a great number of Dutch to carry their commercial activity to New York in New England, and of Swedes to go and dig the ground in New Jersey and Delaware. The presbyterians of Great Britain sought a refuge against religious persecution at Boston ; the German anabaptists and the Irish catholics, stripped of their property, hastened to Pennsylvania, there to seek repose and protection ; lastly, a great number of French protestants fled to Carolina. For so many victims of oppression liberty was not only a want but a passion.

Notwithstanding a few arbitrary acts on the

part of the English government, the American colonists found, under the protection of the English laws, a great proportion of that liberty and of those rights which they would vainly have claimed in their native land; all, therefore, cheerfully submitted to the laws by which the colonies were governed.

Moreover, the multiplicity of religions rendered toleration indispensable amongst them, and, what will, perhaps, appear singular, the example of this toleration was set by the catholics. No church, therefore, was privileged or considered the established church; the ministers of each religion were paid by those who professed it, and there existed between them, not a fatal spirit of jealousy, a source of discord, but a laudable emulation of charity, benevolence and virtue.

It was thus that the minds of a nation who had nothing to fear, either from religious fanaticism, from the pride of a privileged class, or from the turbulence of an unemployed and unfortunate mob, were formed to principles of justice, reason, toleration and true liberty; and who, all enjoying the same rights, no longer made any distinction between their private interests and the interest of the public and general welfare.

In this fortunate situation, the waste lands soon became cultivated, the comforts of life were more generally diffused, and the population increased so rapidly that the British government took umbrage at this growing prosperity, and unjustly used their power to arrest its progress.

They forbade the increase of establishments at a distance from the coasts, they shackled trade by fiscal restrictions, and, in several provinces, the governors even began to persecute some of the sects inimical to the anglican church. The Americans complained loudly at London, and were ill received, the burthen of fiscality became every day more and more intolerable. The proud spirit of this independent race was also continually humbled by seeing America made the land of transportation for vagabonds and culprits condemned by the courts of justice, and the acts of parliament, respecting tea and stamps, carried the irritation of the public mind to the highest pitch. Under these circumstances, several inhabitants of this colony, distinguished by their merit, were sent to London, not to present humble petitions, but to speak the language of free men who knew their rights and felt their power.

In spite of the wise counsels of a well informed opposition, the English ministry only replied to the Americans by threats and violent measures. They then rose and fled to arms, the cry of liberty resounded on all sides, the revolution broke out, and they declared their independence.

It now became necessary to determine, in the midst of the agitation of war, whether a monarchy should be established, or several republics should be formed, or whether these should all be united by a common tie. Then it was that the happy results of all the causes of prosperity and harmony, which I have before alluded to, was obtained.

Each of these thirteen states, whilst fighting against a superb and powerful enemy, quietly framed its constitution, and appointed wise deputies who met together in Congress. These assemblies were pacific, and their deliberations wise and prudent; a common tie rendered the confederation powerful, whilst the individual legislation of each state secured its local independence.

Few alterations were introduced into the manners and civil laws, the government alone was altered. A president, chosen for a limited number of years, having neither guards nor privileges, subject to the law like every other citizen, and responsible as well as the ministers he named, was entrusted with the executive power, but only for objects relative to external policy, trade and the general defence of the federated republics. This authority, the duration of which was limited to a small number of years, was, moreover, watched by a senate and by a chamber of deputies representing the thirteen states by which they were elected. Thus was every precaution required by public order, by unshackled liberty, and by the safety of the confederation, established by a marvellous prudence which foresaw and even regulated by anticipation the alterations in the constitution which time and experience might render necessary.

At last, to the great surprise of every nation, and even of the most enlightened men of every

country, that America, until then so little known, produced a phenomenon, a political edifice superior to any that had yet appeared in even the most ingenious systems of Utopia. The only danger to be apprehended hereafter for this happy republic, which then consisted of three millions of inhabitants, and which has now a population of ten millions, is the state of excessive opulence of which its exclusive commerce seems to hold out the promise, and which may bring luxury and corruption in its train.

The southern provinces should also anticipate and avoid another danger, arising from the circumstance of their containing a great number of poor inhabitants, and of extensive landholders possessing immense fortunes. These fortunes are constantly increasing, and seem only capable of being maintained by the labors of a population of negroes and slaves, a population which is becoming more numerous every day, and which may be frequently driven to despair and revolt, by observing the contrast of their state of bondage with the entire liberty enjoyed by men of the same color in the other provinces of the confederation.

Is not that difference which is observable between the manners and situation of the north and of the south, calculated, in fact, to create an apprehension for the future of a political separation, which would weaken, and, perhaps, even dissolve this happy union, which can only retain its strength whilst it remains firm and intimate? Such was the me-

lancholy reflection which closed the last conversation I had with the Chevalier de Chastellux, at the time he took his departure from the army.

Before I conclude these observations respecting the causes of the prosperity of the United States, I cannot avoid observing that the choice made by the King, in appointing Count de Rochambeau to the command of the French army, was also a most fortunate circumstance in favor of the new republic, for it would have been impossible to find a man uniting, in a greater degree, skill, experience, sagacity, firmness, and popularity.

He was most admirably calculated to agree with Washington, and to serve with republicans. A friend to order, laws and liberty, we were all constrained, even more by his example than by his authority, most scrupulously to respect the rights, property, customs, and morals of our allies. The consequence of this conduct was, that discipline was so well observed during the protracted residence of our army in America, and in the course of our several campaigns, that not a dispute occurred, not a blow was given between the Americans and the French.

A trait related in the memoirs of this general, of which honorable mention was afterwards made in one of the meetings of our first national assembly, and which we all witnessed, will suffice to show, on one side, the prudence and affability of M. de Rochambeau, and, on the other, the idea which each American entertained of the inviolable power of the law.

At the moment of our quitting the camp of Crampont, as M. de Rochambeau was proceeding, at the head of our columns, surrounded by his brilliant staff, an American approached him, tapped him slightly on the shoulder, and, shewing him a paper he held in his hand, said to him : “ In the name of the law you are my prisoner ! ” Several young officers were indignant at this insult offered to their general, but he restrained their impatience by a sign, smiled, and said to the American : “ Take me away with you if you can.” “ No,” replied the American, “ I have done my duty, and your excellency may proceed on your march if you wish to set justice at defiance ; in that case I only ask to be allowed to withdraw unmolested. Some soldiers, of the division of Soissonnais, have cut down several trees, and burnt them to light their fires ; the owner of them claims an indemnity, and has obtained a warrant against you, which I come to execute.”

M. de Rochambeau, having heard this explanation, which was translated to him by one of his aids-de-camp, called M. de Villemazy, now a peer of France, and then intendant of the army, appointed him to be his bail, and ordered him to settle this affair, and to pay what should be considered fair, if the indemnity he had already offered was not thought sufficient. The American then withdrew ; and the general and his army, who had thus been arrested by a constable, continued their march. A judgment of arbitration was afterwards pronounced, fixing two thousand



francs, that is to say, a sum less than the general had offered, as the amount of damages due to this unjust proprietor, who had claimed fifteen thousand, and he was even condemned to pay costs.

Not only has the American republic been distinguished, above all others, by the wisdom of its institutions, and by the internal repose it has enjoyed for the last fifty years, but it has also steered clear of the reproach of ingratitude, which history has constantly addressed to almost all republican states. In all solemnities, in every *fête* the toasts to Louis XVI and France are never forgotten ; and again, on a recent occasion, when unanimously decerning to General La Fayette the most splendid triumph ever enjoyed by any man, ten millions of Americans have proved that the services rendered to them, the dangers braved, and the efforts made to secure their independence, remained indelibly engraved in their memory. I cannot well conceive how some morose beings have refused to feel and to understand that such eminent honors, paid to a Frenchman, were an homage rendered to France, and to her monarch.

The moment of our departure at last arrived, and all uncertainty with respect to General Clinton being at an end, and M. de Vaudreuil having written that his squadron was ready to receive us, M. de Rochambeau, accompanied by the Chevalier de Chastellux, and a part of his staff, left us, after having delivered the command of the army

to Baron de Vioménil, who ordered us to break up our camp at Providence, on the 1st of December, and march to Boston.

The Count Bozon de Talleyrand-Périgord, brother of Prince Talleyrand, and then very young, was aide-de-camp to M. de Chastellux, who now wished to take him back to France, as he had been confided to him by his parents, and he did not wish, by changing the young man's destination, to become responsible with them for the accidents and chances of the war. Bozon was, with reason, much grieved that his first step in the career of arms should thus be a mere momentary apparition at the army; he vainly entreated all our generals to take him with them, and, in his despair, he came to me. I pitied him, but declined giving him any advice. "It is not your advice that I come to ask," said he, "but secrecy and assistance. I have resolved not to return to France with M. de Chastellux, and, as no general will take me, either as officer or aide-de-camp, I turn soldier, and choose you for my chief: the only favor I ask of you is to give me an uniform, and to hide me in the ranks of your regiment."

This resolution of a young warrior, eighteen years old, pleased me. M. de Saint-Maime, the colonel commanding the regiment, was gone to Boston, and the command had devolved upon me; I, therefore, dressed Bozon in one of my uniforms, to which I attached woollen epaulettes, gave him

a grenadier's cap, and christened him *Va-de-bon-cœur*.\*

At the moment, however, when M. de Rochambeau was going to leave us, I confidentially disclosed to him what I had done. He replied that as he could not, as general, approve of our conduct, he should say nothing, and should wink at an act which, as a soldier, he looked upon as noble and praise-worthy. Thus Bozon, or rather *Va-de-bon-cœur*, volunteer grenadier, marched away with his haversac on his back, and his gun on his shoulder.

The severity of the cold rendered our march painful. I was, moreover, obliged to keep, night and day, a strict watch. The prospect of happiness which liberty presented to the soldiers in this country, had created in many of them a desire of quitting their colors, and of remaining in America. In several corps, therefore, the desertion was considerable ; thanks however, to our watchfulness and good fortune, the regiment of Soissonnais lost but a few men.

Before we entered Boston, our troops changed their dress in the open air, and appeared in a short time in such excellent attire, that it seemed incredible, that this army, coming from York Town, could have travelled over many hundred leagues of country, and been exposed to all the inclemency of a rainy autumn, and of a premature winter.

No review or parade ever displayed troops in

\* *Va-de-bon-cœur*, go willingly.

better order, offering an appearance, at once more neat and brilliant. A great part of the population of the town came out to meet us. The ladies stood at their windows, and welcomed us with the liveliest applause; our stay was marked by continued rejoicings, by feasts and balls, which succeeded each other, day after day; they displayed with equal sincerity, the contending sentiments of joy at the triumphs of the allied armies, and of sorrow at our approaching departure.

At the first review our generals soon discovered Bozon, under the dress of *Va-de-bon-cœur*, and pretended not to recognize him; soon, however, the warlike zeal of my young soldier became the general topic of conversation in the whole town; and *Va-de-bon-cœur* had the honor of being invited to all the solemn feasts, given by the magistrates and the authorities of Boston, to the generals and superior officers of the army. It was decided at last, that Bozon should not leave me, and should do the duties of my aide-de-camp during the whole of this campaign, until one of our general officers should have it in his power to receive him in the same capacity.

Boston was the first of the American towns that gave the signal of independence to the United States, and its inhabitants were the first to cement the rising liberty with their blood. Liberty strikes a deeper root in these northern regions, where the climate is more rigorous, the religion more austere, the spirit of equality more generally prevalent, instruction of a stronger cast, and where

the manners and courage of men display a more unbending energy.

In this town I became acquainted with Samuel Adams, and with Hancock, the first and immortal founders of the American republics ; I also formed with Doctor Cooper, celebrated for his profound writings, an intimacy which we kept up for a long time, through the means of an epistolary correspondence.

Bold in his sermons, Doctor Cooper delivered from the pulpit discourses of a political as well as a religious tendency ; and in order to excite the public mind, and to defend the liberty of his country, he wielded the weapons of the fathers of the church at the same time as those of Voltaire and Rousseau. His great talents procured him zealous partisans and ardent enemies. Who can gain elevation without exciting envy ? and so blind was the envy that pursued him, as to accuse him, however contradictory the charges, of too great an exaltation in his maxims, and of too much pliancy in his conduct.

Boston which, owing to its commercial relations, has long been in a flourishing state, appears like the ancestor of the other American cities, and at the period of my residence there, bore a perfect resemblance to a large and ancient English town.

Boston affords a proof that democracy and luxury are not incompatible, for in no part of the United States, is so much comfort, or a more agreeable society to be found. Europe does not offer to our

admiration women adorned with greater beauty, elegance, education, or more brilliant accomplishments than the ladies of Boston, such as Mesdames Jervis, Smith, Tudor, and Morton. Mrs. Tudor, who was afterwards seen in France, has become known by her writings full of wit, one of which was addressed to the Queen of France, and was brought over by M. de Chastellux, and presented to that Princess.

I lodged at the extremity of the town, in a pretty dwelling house belonging to Captain Philips. This officer, who had been greatly ill-used by the English, probably thought that one way of being revenged of them was to give a hearty welcome to a Frenchman. I was therefore received as a member of the family, and shall never forget his obliging hospitality.

The fleet commanded by M. de Vaudreuil consisted of three eighty-gun ships, seven of seventy-four guns, and two frigates, bearing thirty-two guns. They were called *le Triomphant*, *la Couronne*, *le Duc-de-Bourgogne*, *l'Hercule*, *le Souverain*, *le Neptune*, *la Bourgogne*, *le Northumberland*, *le Brave*, *le Citoyen*, *l'Amazone* et *la Néréide*.

I embarked on board *le Souverain*, commanded by the commander Glandevéz, an officer equally respectable for his age, his talents, and his bravery. His intelligence, his mild piety, and the calm gentleness of his disposition had ensured him the affection of his chiefs, of his equals, and of his inferiors.

We were forty-two officers on board of this

ship ; but, as I was the only colonel amongst them, I enjoyed the advantage of being lodged in the council chamber, of having a comfortable bed, and room enough to apply to study.

The faithful Bozon had his hammock near me ; and a fortunate chance, brought on board the same ship, two of my intimate friends, Alexander de Lameth, and Mr. Linch, an officer on the staff.

We set sail on the 24th of December ; and I did not quit North America without expressing the most painful feelings.

I cannot better describe the impression I felt, than by quoting the expressions of a letter I wrote at the moment of leaving that happy land :  
“ This is the day,” I said, “ on which I set sail ;  
“ I am quitting with infinite regret a country  
“ where, without obstacle or difficulty, we are,  
“ what every where else we ought to be, sincere  
“ and free. Here all private interests merge into  
“ the general welfare ; every one lives for himself,  
“ dresses as he pleases, and not as it pleases fashion.  
“ People here think, say, and do what they  
“ like ; nothing compels them to submit to the  
“ caprices of fortune or of power. The law protects individual will against the will of all ;  
“ and nothing obliges any one to be deceitful, humble, or cringing. Every body may, at pleasure, be plain or singular, court solitude or society ; live as traveller, politician, literary character, or as merchant, without being either  
“ disturbed in his occupations, or molested in  
“ his idleness. Singularity of manners or of

“ taste, gives offence to no one. There exists no restraint beyond that of a very limited number of just laws which are equally dispensed to all, and all enjoy peace, happiness and consideration, as long as they respect those laws and the public morals, whereas in other countries, fashion and fortune are often attained by a defiance of the laws and of public morals. I have never found, in short, any thing else in this political Eldorado, but public confidence, frank hospitality, and open cordiality. Young girls here are innocently coquettish in search of husbands, whilst married women act with propriety, in order to preserve theirs ; and the gross irregularity which, under the name of gallantry, would in Paris only raise a smile, is here shuddered at, under the name of adultery.”

“ Although beset by the storms of a civil war, the Americans so little suspect mankind of an immorality which their own minds cannot conceive, that in their small dwelling houses, isolated in the midst of immense forests, the doors have no bolts, and are kept shut by latchets only. The strangers whom they admit to lodge with them, together with the servants, find all their presses and wardrobes left open, though filled with their money and apparel. Far from suspecting any possible violation of the rights of hospitality, they allow their guests to walk about for whole days alone with their daughters of sixteen years of age, who have no other protection than their modesty, and whose in-



“genious familiarity, bespeaks their innocence,  
“and commands respect from the most depraved  
“hearts. I shall, perhaps, be told that America  
“will not always preserve such simple virtues,  
“and such purity of morals; but were she to  
“retain them no longer than a century, is a cen-  
“tury of happiness so inconsiderable a blessing?”

The season was beginning to be so severe, that the thermometer marked 26°. The navigation along the coast of North America, at this time of the year, is exceedingly dangerous; and, to avoid accidents, we ought, as we had started with a favorable wind, to have availed ourselves of it, to hasten out of the gulph and get out to sea.

Unfortunately however our admiral, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, cruised for some time in sight of the harbour, because he expected his brother, who was to come out of Portsmouth to join us with his ship, *l'Auguste* of eighty guns, and *le Pluton* of seventy-four guns.

This delay nearly proved fatal to us; the wind became contrary, and soon began to blow with such violence, that some of our sails were rent asunder. After having furled those that remained, which is called by sailors, *to bring to*, we felt ourselves rapidly carried, in the midst of a dark night, towards a shore thick set with rocks, against which we were, to all appearance, destined to strike, without any chance of escape.

A tremendous sea appeared at every moment, ready to swallow us up; at one moment the waves nearly upset our ship, and inundated the deck;

whilst at the next, the same waves, after having raised us as it were to the top of a high mountain, lowered us into an abyss, and returning again with increased rage, carried off a part of our quarter gallery, broke our windows, and filled all our rooms and batteries.

The danger was increasing every moment, and was the more imminent for us, as *le Souverain* was old, and experienced a greater deflection than the rest. No nautical manœuvring could resist the storm. Our crew, struck with dismay, remained motionless.

Our captain, almost the only individual who preserved his presence of mind, displayed a calm and pious resignation. I asked him if he saw no hope. "None," said he, "for during the many years I have been at sea, I never have found myself in a more critical position ; we are almost surrounded by rocks, and the sea is too unmanageable for any boat or canoe to be able to resist its violence."

"But quietly," replied Bozon, "nothing is more variable than the wind, and that which now assails us, may change suddenly." "That hope is chimerical," said the captain ; "this violent wind blows from the south-east, and we are so far engaged in the gulph, that it would be necessary, in order to extricate us, that the wind by a sudden change, should run half round the compass, and jump to the north-west, a thing unexampled. I am surprised we have not yet struck upon some rock ; but, at the first

“ shock you will feel, it will be all over with us.”

These words pronounced by a man so courageous, so calm, and so well experienced, bereft us of all hope ; and terror, the gloomy forerunner of death, now pervaded every breast.

I admired on this occasion, the calm and lofty courage of Lameth, who seemed to brave his fate, and coolly conversed with me upon the immortality of the soul ; Bozon, a Frenchman, to the last, manifested an unalterable gaiety, and seemed resolved to bid the world farewell with a laugh. We were prepared for the worst, and expected the shock that was to destroy us.

Suddenly we felt a dreadful concussion ; our ship inclined to starboard in such a way, as to make us suppose, that it was going to upset. We bade each other farewell, but, at that moment, the lieutenant of the watch swiftly entered the room, exclaiming, “ Captain, a miracle, the wind has just veered to the north-west.” “ Not a moment is to be lost,” answered M. de Glandevez, crossing himself ; “ we must put up all our canvass, and get out to sea immediately, for this extraordinary change of the wind, cannot last long.”

He was quickly obeyed. Soon afterwards, the whole squadron got out of the gulph with all sails set, and reached the open sea. Two hours had scarcely elapsed, before the gale from the south-east again began to blow with the same fury as before, but we were then out of danger. This gale compelled us again to *bring to*, and lasted three days, after which the weather grew more

favorable, and M. de Vaudreuil, not thinking it advisable to wait any longer for his brother, we directed our course to the southward.

A convoy of twenty-nine merchant vessels had followed us out of the harbour ; we never saw it again, a part was lost on the coast ; a few re-entered the harbour ; several fell into the hands of the English.

All the elements seemed leagued against us ; for in the latitude of Bermuda, our ship caught fire ; our terror was great, but of short duration ; the activity of the pumps soon relieved us from our anxiety.

Favored by the wind, we soon reached another climate, and after having so recently left a station, where we had experienced, in spite of our furs, the cold of the frozen zone, we now passed into a burning zone ; and this contrast rendered the heat more intolerable. A few weeks afterwards, we descried the shores of the island of Porto-Rico ; the approach to which had been previously announced to us, by the fragrant perfume which their orange and lemon trees wafted to us through the air.

M. de Vaudreuil, wishing to procure intelligence, sent a boat ashore. On its return, we were informed, that Admiral Hood had been cruising to leeward of us for the last three months, with sixteen sail, before Cape François, at Saint Domingo, and that Admiral Pigot was cruising to windward before Martinique, with a fleet of twenty-five sail.

It will thereby be seen, that we were expected in the Antilles by a numerous and formidable company, with whom it would have been imprudent to confer too closely.

One of our sloops, that had been on the look out, came at night to inform us, that she had discovered, at a distance, some small vessels belonging to Hood's squadron.

We passed at night between Porto-Rico and Saint Domingo, always supposing that the latter island was the place of our destination, that we were there to form a junction with the Spanish squadron, and that M. de Vaudreuil, to avoid Hood who was waiting for him before the Cape, wished to run along the southern coast of the island, and to get into one of its harbors. The admiral, however, whose instructions were different, had assigned to Admiral don Solano, another rendez-vous which was unknown to every individual in the squadron.

With no small astonishment therefore, we observed that he was directing our course more and more to the southward. Our progress was but slow, as we had several vessels in tow, that formed part of a convoy of nineteen vessels which had left Porto-Rico, to sail in company with us.

On coming within sight of Curaçao, a Dutch colony, only fifteen leagues distant from the southern continent of America, we all imagined that the harbour of Curaçao would be the end of our voyage, but we were again mistaken, and we saw, with great surprise, that the admiral beating against the easterly wind in order to bear up to

the eastward, kept cruising between the shores of the continent and of Curaçao, without touching at either.

The currents which are very rapid in this quarter, combined with the wind to oppose our efforts ; and soon dispersed our fleet ; our convoy unable to keep up with us, and which we could no longer tow, also left us.

Three of our ships that had suffered most from the hurricane, were allowed to put into the harbour of Curaçao. The remainder of the squadron, being in good condition, and excellent sailors, succeeded in resisting the currents, and disappeared altogether from our sight. We deflected more and more, and *la Bourgogne*, alone kept company with us.

Thus separated from the fleet, our captains opened the instructions which they were only to unseal in the event of a separation. These instructions informed us, that our destination was the harbour of Porto-Cabello on the coast of Caracas,<sup>f</sup> which was thirty leagues to windward of us.

We were to wait there for the Count d'Estaing, who was to sail from Cadiz with a French naval army, and the Spanish Admiral don Solano, who would leave the port of Havannah, and form his junction with us. After this junction, the combined armies were to set sail together, and attack Jamaica.

No better rendez-vous could have been chosen to deceive the English, who were waiting for us at Saint Domingo : but it had been too mysteriously concealed from us, as by some unaccount-

able neglect, none of our captains had been provided with charts for their guidance in this quarter, and hardly any one in our army, was well acquainted with the position of Porto-Cabello.

It happened however, that the pilot of *le Souverain*, had an old imperfect chart, which, such as it was, proved of great service to us ; as it pointed out with sufficient accuracy the distance from Curaçao to the continental coast, and saved us from the unfortunate error which was committed by the captain of *la Bourgogne*.

This officer continued to cruise during the night, and fancying that the coast of the continent was at a greater distance than it actually was, kept too long upon the same tack, and struck against a sand bank. We soon heard the report of her guns, and the uniform interval between each, soon informed us that they were not signals of engagement but of distress.

M. de Glandevéz wished to go to her assistance ; but as the current caused us to deflect greatly, we could not succeed, and consequently only learnt the fate of this ship, at a much later period. Her captain, M. de C . . . . ., lost his presence of mind on feeling the severe shocks experienced by the ship ; he might have backed at once, by bracing his sails aback, and thus extricated himself ; but he, on the contrary, put up more sail, in the hope of forcing his way through the bank, and got deeper into the sand.

A boat which was hastily let down from the ship, was dashed to pieces ; a canoe sent on shore

with M. Désendroin, an officer of engineers, to seek for assistance, did not return again ; for this officer was compelled to walk a distance of twenty leagues in the forest before he could discover any habitation. Another boat was stolen by the captain's servants who carried away his plate.

The leak increased every moment, and they neglected to remove the provisions from the hold to the deck ; terror prevented the adoption of any measure of prudence. A first raft had been constructed ; but so many persons eagerly jumped upon it that they sank it and were drowned.

This accident created so much alarm, that, after a second had been constructed, all hesitated to trust themselves to it. M. de C...., set the example, and got upon it with several of his officers. Others followed them ; but when the raft was sufficiently loaded, the captain, unmindful of his duty and forgetting the law which enjoined him to return on board his ship and be the last to leave it, ordered the cable to be cut, and shoved off.

Some of the soldiers and of the crew, thrown into despair by this desertion, swam off to reach the raft ; but those who were upon it had the inhumanity to chop off, with their swords, the hands of these unfortunate men who vainly implored their compassion.

Independently of the cowardice of this act, the event shewed that it had been dictated by an ill-judged terror ; since, three days afterwards, a frigate sent from Porto-Cabello, arrived in time



to save the remainder of the crew of *la Bourgogne*, and the soldiers of the regiment of Bourbonnais who had been left to perish in it. They were exhausted with hunger and thirst; yet the greater part of them survived the accident. The captain of *la Bourgogne* met with a most unwelcome reception at Porto-Cabello, and was sent back to France.

The wind having abated, we forced our way through the currents, and after a difficult navigation of eleven days, with the sounding lead constantly in hand on account of being in an unknown quarter, we reached the gulph named Triste, in sight of Porto-Cabello, where we found all our squadron again united. This voyage from Boston had lasted fifty-six days.

My colonel commandant, M. de Saint-Maime, had remained at Curaçao with his ship which had lost its masts and rudder, so that the remainder of the regiment was left under my orders.

The southern continent of America presents to travellers as they approach its shores, a very different appearance from that of the coasts of the northern continent. On approaching the Delaware the eye discovers a low and flat country; from a distance the trees seem to grow out of the sea, and on landing, the climate, the plants, the cultivation, the style of buildings, the costume, the manners of the inhabitants, the activity of the farmers, the mercantile industry, the beauty of the roads, the elegance of the towns and the

neatness of the villages, are calculated to induce the traveller to fancy himself still in Europe, and in the heart of an English county.

But on landing on the southern continent, a very different prospect presents itself; the land is seen from a considerable distance; but to perceive it we must look up to the skies. The branches of the Cordilleras, the gigantic mountains of Santa-Martha, of Valencia, of Caracas, are nealy half a league in elevation.

Those cragged rocks, those formidable mountains seem to be a kind of barrier with which fate had intended to fence this immense continent, in order to forbid its approach to the avarice of Europe, and to conceal its inexhaustible mines of gold, silver and diamonds, those fatal treasures which inflamed the cupidity of so many adventurers, the rivalry of so many powers, and turned America into a sanguinary arena, where whole nations swept away became the victims of a savage hypocrisy.

There fanaticism and a thirst after gold destroyed to convert, spread desolation to acquire riches, exterminated to fix their dominion, and with the gospel of a God of peace in their hand, lighted up in every direction the piles upon which, in spite of the virtuous efforts of Las Casas, heaps of human victims were sacrificed, as in the days of paganism.

The revolutions of ancient times, were mere trifles when compared with the revolutions that

overthrew the pacific empire of the Incas ; in the latter, whole nations perished and disappeared altogether.

The nearer we approach the shores of this continent, the greater is the shadow which the sombre mass of those lofty mountains seems to cast upon the sea, and the more melancholy are the thoughts with which they inspire the mind. At those points in particular, where they recede the gulphs they form, present so gloomy a space to the eye, that, in entering them one appears to be penetrating into the kingdom of shades ; no name therefore was ever more appropriately applied than that of *gulph of sadness*, (*golfe Triste*) which is given to the gulph of Porto-Cabello.

It was not until we were quite close to the coast, that those mountains and the shore became gradually more clear and distinct, and that we were enabled to see trees and fields, roads and houses, every thing in short, which indicates an inhabited land.

The harbour we entered is extensive, safe, and commodious ; ships ride close to the shore ; we were cautioned to beware of eating any of the fish that may be caught here in great abundance ; and which is sometimes dangerous food from the bottom of the sea being in some places coppery.

The great advantages which this harbour and roadstead presented to commerce, could alone determine the Spaniards to form an establishment on this spot ; for, close to Porto-Cabello there

are salt marshes, the pestilential vapors of which are continually carried over the town by the wind, which, in this quarter, constantly blows from the eastward; and which vapors being heated by the refraction of mountains distant ten degrees from the line, and by the powerful rays of the sun which no cloud ever intercepts, render this shore even more destructive than Cayenne.

Few persons are bold enough to brave the danger, and to fix their residence in Porto-Cabello, the population of which is renewed every seven years. The inhabitants of the plain come there merely for commercial affairs, and stay in it but a short time. Many are very soon carried off, and the greater part of the remainder take the fever back to their homes. Mortality is most frequent in the months of June, July, August and September; diseases then become very violent, are accompanied by buboes, and assume a character truly pestilential.

Nature however would require of man but little labour, in order to present him with inexhaustible riches upon this shore, free from fear or danger; the land beyond the marshes possesses a rare and wonderful fecundity; indigo, cocoa, cotton, Indian corn, are there of easy cultivation and abundant produce; the trees bear excellent fruit; the banana and orange trees are of spontaneous growth, as well as the pine-apple and potatoe, so that, by drying up the marshes, Porto-Cabello would become the centre of one of the finest and wealthiest establishments in the world.

This town is built on the banks of a small river, the water of which is both pure and healthy. Its houses few in number and ill-built, rise in amphitheatre by a gentle ascent to the foot of a very elevated mountain.

We all felt much regret at being detained upon these semi-barbarous shores. The intolerable heat of the climate, the infectious air we were breathing, the filth of the houses, or rather of the huts, wherein we lodged; and lastly, the repulsive manner, the inhospitable and silent gravity of the inhabitants, would have made us consider this abode as a perfect prison; but our exile was fortunately softened by the attentions of a Spaniard of the highest merit, Colonel Don Pedro de Nava, governor of the province of Caracas.

He had come to Porto-Cabello on purpose to receive us, and his obliging activity supplied, in abundance, all the wants of the fleet and of the army; an intelligent administrator seconded his efforts; so that, notwithstanding the long distances, the difficulty of communications, and the want of almost every means of transport, in a country where mules were the only mode of conveyance, and ravines the only roads, every thing arrived in time, and our soldiers and sailors were at no time more completely supplied with whatsoever was necessary to them.

Independently of this liberal conduct, Don Pedro de Nava opened his house to us, and did the honors of it with becoming dignity; he was well

informed, amiable, and obliging ; his mind seemed neither obscured nor confined by any of the prejudices of his nation ; he was tolerant in his opinions, correct in his ideas, elevated in his sentiments. He lamented the deplorable condition of that part of the world upon which nature had bestowed her riches, but which ignorance, despotism, and the inquisition had succeeded in rendering poor and unproductive.

Such a man as Don Pedro de Nava, if it had been in his power, would have rendered those magnificent provinces as happy and as populous as, and richer than, the United States ; but he could do no more than passively obey ; imprisonment or death would have been the only result of the smallest attempt to dispel the clouds of darkness, and promote civilization. We had just beheld civilization carried to the highest pitch in the North, and we found it in its infancy, in a country conquered by Spain nearly three centuries ago, and which had remained under her sway ever since.

Notwithstanding the delicate and obliging attentions of Don Pedro de Nava, we felt much regret at finding our stay prolonged in this gloomy abode, where health could not escape from contagion, nor the mind from ennui ; for the excessive heat would seldom allow us to indulge in bodily exercises, or in study.

I only went out at six o'clock in the morning, to go into the woods, in the hope of killing some tiger-cats ; but I only saw a few, and at a great

distance. I succeeded, however, in killing many serpents, some monkeys, and a considerable number of parrots.

An extraordinary monkey had been given to me ; it was of the largest size, about five feet in height ; its brown hair bordered upon red, a color the more remarkable from its contrast with a very thick black beard that fell upon its breast. I had hoped to bring it back to France, but could not succeed in taming it. This animal was tied to a tree, close to my house, and was so ferocious as to attempt to devour one of my men, who brought it some food. Bozon and I were, at last, compelled to shoot it.

I was obliged to return in doors as early as nine in the morning, at which hour the excessive heat of the sun compelled every one to seek rest and shade. The evenings alone, by their pleasant freshness, tempted us to go out ; but this freshness was dangerous, being combined with a considerable degree of humidity, which is the chief cause of those disorders that carry off so many Europeans in the torrid zone.

We awaited, with the utmost impatience, at Porto-Cabello the arrival of the naval army of M. d'Estaing, who was to come out of Cadiz, and of Don Solano, whom we had thought ready to set sail from Havannah. But time was passing, and, from neither the one nor the other, did we receive any kind of intelligence.

The gulph Triste was admirably selected for a mysterious rendez-vous ; as, generally speaking, it was little known ; consequently the English,

after finding that we had escaped them, by passing through their fleet near the island of Saint-Domingo, and Porto-Rico, were at a loss for some time to guess in what direction we had disappeared, and in what bay of the continent we had anchored.

Our troops, however, were beginning to feel the effects of disease. Some officers, and a great number of soldiers, fell victims to this destructive scourge. Our commanding officer, the Baron de Vioménil, was seized with a fever, and his legs were covered with buboes. Alexander de Lameth, and Champcenetz, also paid a similar tribute to this formidable climate.

I was, in my turn, attacked with a violent fever, and, having but little confidence in the treatment prescribed by our European surgeons, whose practice was rather at fault in this burning zone, I made an attempt to cure myself; and, for that purpose, got up to the neck into a tub full of cold water, and remained twenty-four hours in it. This rash expedient proved successful; the fever left me.

In the meanwhile our attentive commandant, Don Pedro, advised us to go beyond the mountains, to seek a purer air in the plains, and to take advantage of our inactivity to visit Caracas, a fine wealthy town, the capital of the province. "I would not recommend to you," said he with a smile, "to ask the Governor General's permission to perform the journey; he would be equally at a loss to grant or to refuse your request; and his answer might be delayed for a considerable time.



“ The Spanish Cabinet is not pleased at strangers becoming acquainted with the interior of this country. Proceed, then, without such formalities ; the governor is a very amiable man ; he will give you a welcome reception, and the inhabitants, as well as the ladies of Caracas, will greet you with enthusiasm.”

We followed his advice. Alexander de Lameth was the most expeditious and the most daring of the party ; for, instead of following the beaten track to Valencia, or of going by sea to La Guayra, he crossed from west to east, in the midst of the mountains, by almost impracticable paths, braving dangers of every kind, which but even few of the inhabitants of the country dared to face.

The Prince de Broglie embarked with the captain of his ship, M. d'Ethis, reached Caracas in this manner, through La Guayra, and afterwards returned to Porto-Cabello by the road of Valencia.

Mathieu Dumas, Bozon, Champeenetz, Désoteux, and myself, hired mules for our own party, and entered the mountains by a path which was, by a great misnomer, called a road, being an almost impracticable track ; in fact, it was only owing to our having mules as light and as dexterous as goats, that we escaped the most disastrous falls.

This path, which was not more than two feet wide, held us suspended over precipices. Being cut in the rock, it resembled a stair case of unequal steps ; some times it turned round so suddenly

that the hind feet of the mules were yet in one direction, whilst their fore feet were stepping into another. The mule was bent, as it were, and we had before us a precipice of eight hundred feet, into which the slightest stumble might have hurled us.

Small wooden crosses, fixed on these dangerous spots, served also as a charitable memento to warn the traveller of the misfortunes of those who had preceded him.

After a painful day's journey, we reached, at last, by nightfall, that immense and magnificent platform which extends to the Oronoco, a country upon which heaven has bestowed all its gifts, and nature all her treasures.

These treasures were entirely lost in the hands of an ignorant administration, which arrested the progress of prosperity, diminished the population by shackles of every kind, through an apprehension that independence might follow in the train of riches, and which has attempted in vain to retain those fertile countries in a state of languor and oppression. Events have greater power than men ; liberty, as every thing then led us to foresee it, has sprung out of the very efforts made to stifle it ; it has assumed a hostile attitude, and has conquered ; and, in half a century hence, these fine provinces which, with the exception of a few cities and country towns, I had found quite deserted, will, probably, vie in cultivation, in industry, and in power, with the most flourishing monarchies or republics of Old Europe.

The city of Valencia is built in a fertile, delightful, and level plain ; the regular breezes refresh the atmosphere, and render the excessive heat tolerable. Valencia reckoned about twelve thousand inhabitants ; it had a garrison of five hundred men ; a bishop and a governor also resided in it ; convents, and a multitude of monks were to be seen in every direction ; it had scarcely any trade ; its streets were dirty, its houses ill built, but its churches most splendid. The inhabitants were generally poor ; the church dignitaries, the canons, and the convents wealthy.

It was with a view of getting rid of such a state of things, that the people, after useless complaints for redress of grievances, at last flew to arms, and that the revolution broke out. A traveller, who has lately seen in the province of Santa-Fé, the traces of that deplorable administration, which have not yet been entirely effaced, founds arguments upon them for condemning the insurrection of these provinces, whose ingratitude towards the mother country, he professes himself unable to understand.

Had he bestowed more reflection upon the subject, he would, on the contrary, have discovered in that deplorable state, the real motives that impelled the colonies to shake off the yoke of an administration which inflicted so much distress upon them, and he would not have been surprized that the catholic creoles, or native priests, should declare themselves for independence, had he known and observed that the bishoprics, the curacies, and

canonries, which are so rich in this country, were exclusively given to Spaniards, and constantly refused to the clergy of American birth.

So far indeed from deploring the condition of those brave soldiers whom he finds so ill clothed and so ill paid, and from prophecying their defeat from these causes, he would, on the contrary, have felt convinced of the warmth and disinterestedness of their patriotism ; he might have learnt besides that but little clothing is necessary in this climate, and that a very moderate pay is sufficient since the ground every where supplies food which costs nothing, and a bullock is either given for a sum of twelve francs, or for the mere trouble of skinning it, and of returning its skin to the vender.

We stopped but a short time at Valencia. The bishop avoided us, taking us, I suppose, for heretics ; the governor gave us a ceremonious, though a cold reception ; and the inhabitants were silent and morose. As nothing therefore attracted our attention or curiosity, we proceeded on our journey.

The road was excellent ; on both sides we met with some habitations, and indigo plantations. The freshness of some thick forests often sheltered us from the rays of the sun.

As it was our intention to travel slowly, and the villages and towns in this country are at considerable distances from each other, we passed many nights in the forests. We suspended to the trees, the wide nets or hammocks, which served

us as beds, and large fires were lighted near us in order to keep off the ferocious animals, whose dreadful howlings resounded through the woods.

Having been compelled to stop before we reached Guacara, an Indian village, and finding myself separated from my companions and my servants, I saw four Indians approaching me. Three of them were armed with bows and arrows; they strung their bows, and imagining for a moment they were about to attack me, I ran to meet them sword in hand, but the chaplets round their necks, their signs, and gesticulations, soon satisfied me that they were christian and tributary Indians.

My comrades had purchased a bow and arrows of one of them, and they were exhibiting their own, thinking perhaps that I might have the same fancy; I gave them however to understand that I merely wished to witness their dexterity in wielding them.

They discovered what I meant, waited one or two minutes, and on perceiving over our heads a large bird of the *arras* kind, one of those Indians shot his arrow at it, and brought it down dead at my feet. I gave them a few dollars, and rejoined my companions at the moment of their entering Guacara, whose inhabitants received us with much cordiality, but supplied us with very bad provisions.

At night, having strolled out of the house of my landlord, to walk upon a spacious grass plot, I sat down at the foot of a tree, to enjoy the cool breeze, when an Indian ran gently up to me with

a dark lanthorn, took me by the hand, and hurried me away with him. At the distance of about fifty paces from the tree, he stopped, and turning his lanthorn, shewed me the danger I had been exposed to ; for, at the foot of the tree, near which I had been, a young tiger, recently caught, was fastened by a chain, and he might have punished me rather severely, for disturbing his rest.

By the assistance of an interpreter, I enquired of my Indian landlord, why no cultivation except a few Indian corn plants, was to be seen near his village. “ Wherefore should we labour, answered he ? a hut made of the stumps of trees, and some banana leaves are sufficient to give us shelter, furniture, and beds. The heat renders every kind of dress superfluous ; the earth provides us with abundance of fruit and grain. If we were to cultivate the fields, we could not find purchasers for our produce ; and yet the Spanish government, would in that case, impose a tax upon us ; and as we should be unable to pay it, they would condemn us to labour in the mines, or to fish for gold in the streams.”

The Prince de Broglie told me, on his return, that, in a larger country town, named Cumana, where I had not stopped, he had conversed, through an interpreter, with the *Cacique*, or Chief of the Free Indians of this province. They lived, said he, entirely according to their old customs, governed by their own chief, whose authority is, at the same time, military, civil, and religious.

This chief regulates their marriages, and settles all disputes that arise between them.

This *Cacique* pretended that the Spanish government had, for some time, shewn him much consideration ; but, that he had since lost his influence with them ; and that, notwithstanding his remonstrances and those of his tribes, the Spaniards were daily encroaching upon the lands granted to his subjects, so that the population of these poor native Indians was gradually decreasing. It is probable, from these facts, that what remained of that population, which, forty years ago, was already diminishing, will have since become totally extinct, or have fled from this abode of oppression.

We continued our journey, sometimes through wildernesses and forests, which recalled to the mind, the period of the discovery of America, sometimes across plains where some scattered habitations and cultivated fields, marked a dawn of civilization, and reached Maracay, a small neat town. Its inhabitants gave us a very friendly reception, and a captain of militia, named Don Felix, gave us an excellent supper, which was graced with the company of several ladies of remarkable beauty.

Don Felix, the king's lieutenant at Maracay, was a well informed, amiable man ; he spoke French fluently, and freely confided to us the grief he experienced at the unjust and oppressive conduct of the administration ; he more particularly inveighed against the cruelty and avarice of

the fiscality and the harsh severity of the intendant of the province. "This man," said he, "deprives commerce and agriculture of all activity, the landed proprietors of all security; employments are given to none but Spaniards; the creoles are distressed and ruined. Believe me, therefore, the silent fermentation so universally prevalent will soon break out. Nothing is wanting to produce an explosion, but a man of energy as a leader; and I foresee that my country will unavoidably fall a prey to all the horrors of a civil war. Some years ago, a *Cacique*, named Tupac Amarou, of the race of the Incas, had revolted; and had collected in Peru an army of twenty thousand men. It was found very difficult to quell this insurrection. It is said that in many other places disturbances are at this moment fomented by the creoles. The ruling authorities, however, prevent the circulation of all alarming intelligence."

We quitted with regret a guest, whose conversation was both interesting and instructive, and took the road to Vittoria. At a short distance from Maracay, is the lake of Valencia, one of the most extensive perhaps in the whole world. Handsome dwellings and variegated cultivations already adorned its shores. I am persuaded, that at a future day, under the protecting shield of liberty, that lake and its borders will become one of the wonders of this hemisphere.

We crossed the most fertile district of the province; no where else had we seen so great



a number of habitations, of plantations of coffee, of cocoa nuts, and of indigo. The spacious intervals that separated them, were filled up with wood rather wild but which sheltered us from the sun, and delighted us, by the variety of the trees, the lively colors of their fruits, the perfume of their flowers, and the varied warbling of every species of birds, by which they were peopled. This beautiful country was watered by a small river, whose numerous windings obliged us to cross it seven or eight times.

In the middle of the day, and during the greatest heat, we passed by an isolated house, surrounded with plantations of various kinds, and cultivated with much care. I was not a little astonished at being accosted by a man who stood on the threshold of the door, and who very politely invited us, in very good French, to walk in.

Who could have expected to find a countryman in this place? But such was the case; born at Bayonne, he had embarked on board a merchant vessel, which had been wrecked upon the coast of Caracas; and having, by good fortune, saved his money and part of his effects, he had resolved to travel into the interior of these provinces.

Having arrived on the spot where we now found him he had become enamoured of an Indian girl and had married her. Acting at once in the capacity of husbandman, bricklayer and architect, he had raised to himself a pretty habitation and a numerous family, and by way of preserving

a recollection of the customs of his country and of the trade of his father, he had put up a sign to his house and called himself an innkeeper, although he did not perhaps see, during the whole year as many as four travellers coming to claim his hospitality.

His wife was still handsome, notwithstanding, her very marked coppery complexion. This color of the Indians which forms a contrast with their long black hair, is the less disagreeable as their features are regular, and they have neither the flatted nose nor the thick lips of the negroes.

After having made a tolerably good dinner, according to the French fashion, and finding but little resource in the conversation of our host, whose mind had imbibed all the indolence of the native Indians, we mounted our mules once more and arrived in the evening at Vittoria, one of the prettiest towns of this country, and which is about twelve leagues from Maracay. Its population consisted of three thousand inhabitants, and it displayed an activity of commerce, then very uncommon in that part of the world.

The King's lieutenant who commanded in that town was a M. Pradon. As he was very fond of talking, and had but few opportunities of indulging that propensity, our arrival was a treat for him, and he accordingly very obligingly took us about to visit the town. He possessed no inconsiderable share of instruction, his disposition was open and unreserved and rather given to censure. In a few hours, he gave us more information re-

specting the state of his country than we could have learned by a long journey.

He formed a perfect contrast with Don Felix, whom we had just left: the latter, like Héraclitus, deplored the darkness and ignorance, resulting from the existence of the Inquisition, the oppression under which his country groaned, and the future storms which threatened it. M. Prudon, on the contrary, in the true spirit of a Democritus, laughed at superstition, ridiculed the imbecility of the ruling powers, and gaily assured us that a revolution, similar to that which had broken out in the United States, was inevitable at no very distant period.

“ Here,” said he, “ the Inquisition does not, “ it is true, order any *auto-da-fè*, nor light any “ fires, but it endeavors to extinguish every ray “ of light. It is protected by the intendant- “ general, and the least suspicion of impiety, “ that attaches to an individual, is sufficient to “ cause him to be arrested and fined, and even “ confiscation often ensues. I am obliged to “ assume a mask to appear blind like the rest “ and to follow like them the most puerile “ practices. I, as well as several of my friends, “ burn to read the works of the celebrated writers “ of France; but the intendant forbids their “ importation under the severest penalties, as “ if they were infected with the plague. In short, “ added M. Prudon, already the indignant creoles “ begin to call the Spaniards *forestières*, that is, “ strangers, a circumstance undoubtedly quite

“ sufficient to prove that the mother country  
“ and her colonies will not long live in peace and  
“ harmony together.”

In this town we also saw a physician, who was quite as dissatisfied with his government as M. Prudon ; having conducted us to the most retired part of his house, he shewed us with infinite satisfaction the works of J.-J. Rousseau and Raynal, which he kept concealed as his most precious treasure in a beam curiously scooped out for that purpose.

We here witnessed on the large square a bull-fight, a cruel and melancholy game, and one calculated to perpetuate barbarism of manners. At the house of the governor, we enjoyed a more agreeable diversion, that of a party composed of an assemblage of the best educated men, and the prettiest women of the town.

Having remained twenty-four hours at Vittoria, we left it to repair to Caracas, which is about fourteen leagues distant from it. We performed this journey in two days. On approaching the capital of a country, the traveller naturally expects to find nature at every step embellished by art, a greater number of habitations, a higher degree of cultivation, more activity of trade, more life, in short, and civilization ; but we found quite the reverse of all this.

After having travelled through some plains fertile in plantations of indigo, coffee, &c. and through fields of Indian corn, we entered upon a road leading through mountains much more

steep, and through forests much more savage than those we had had to pass on our way from Porto-Cabello to Valencia. The road was, however, better marked out and less dangerous.

In the valleys we were exhausted with the excessive heat, and on the summits of the mountains we were exposed to a cold so intense that our cloaks were insufficient to protect us against it. During the night such was the dampness of the atmosphere that, by wringing our coverings, water issued from them in abundance. These mountains are only a very little less elevated than the Cordilleras, of which they form a branch.

During the night the howling of tigers and of lions cast a gloom over our spirits, and in the morning we were stunned by the sharp and piercing cries of an innumerable host of aras and parrots, who hailed the rising sun, and rendered him a savage homage by the most discordant concerts.

During our journey we were surprised to hear the ferocious cries of an animal which seemed rapidly to approach us, and our guide informed us, with the utmost consternation, that it was a tiger. We had no sooner heard this intelligence than, disregarding the advice of our guide, we bent our steps towards that part of the wood whence the noise proceeded.

Désoteux, who was the only one armed with pistols, struck into the thickest of the forest, but the tiger had fled. He then vented his rage by

discharging his pistol at a large monkey, which he missed.

I met nothing further in these forests except an enormous serpent of the boa kind, which was basking in the sun upon some bushes. I had, at first, taken it for an immense trunk of a tree that had been thrown down, and I could not, I confess, guard against an involuntary shudder when at the moment when my mule was so near as almost to touch it, this apparent tree rose, bent its body, exhibiting a most hideous head, and with a most terrific hissing fled before me.

There is another species of animal in this country of a most horrible aspect, and that is a gigantic bat, larger than a Spanish hat, and whose infernal countenance resembles the most strange and terrific masks of our devils at the opera. They are called *vampires*, and the common people believe that, when they find a man asleep, they suck his blood with so much dexterity that they do not even wake him.

Having had a most fatiguing day's journey, and being far from all habitations, we asked an old Indian woman to give us shelter, which she agreed to, and conducted us to her hut, which truly resembled the abode of a savage or of a witch.

This woman did all she could to treat us well ; but she offered us parrots boiled in a horrible kind of chocolate, and other dishes so very dis-

gusting, that we found ourselves unable to overcome our repugnance.

After having slept but little, like people with an empty stomach, we continued our journey. We had to pass a very high mountain, called San-Pedro, which we accomplished with difficulty, then to go down into a deep valley, after that to ford several torrents, and, at last, after having climbed another mountain, we descended by a gentle declivity into the delightful valley of Caracas.

This valley, which is protected by high mountains from the burning south wind, is open to the cool easterly breezes which continually refresh its temperature. The thermometer seldom rises above twenty-four degrees, and often marks only twenty; consequently, fruits and flowers succeed each other, without interruption, in this beautiful spot, which offers all the productions of the torrid and temperate zones. The fields where the indigo plant, the sugar cane and the lemon tree grow, are bordered with gardens, in some of which corn, pear trees and apple trees are to be found.

The valley is watered by a pretty and limpid river, which gives to the fields and trees everlasting freshness and verdure. These trees are adorned by a host of colibris, whose beautiful plumage unites all the colors of the rainbow, they offer the appearance of innumerable flowers floating in the air.

A great number of elegant houses are scattered

in the midst of these fields, some singly, others distributed in groups: the ground around them is carefully cultivated and inclosed with odori-ferous hedges. The air is there constantly embalmed, and there existence seems to acquire a fresh activity to enable man to enjoy the purest sensations life can dispense. In short, were it not for some inquisitorial monks, some savage alguazils, a few tigers, and some agents of a covetous intendant-general, I should have almost fancied that the valley of Caracas formed part of the terrestrial paradise, and that the angel who guards the gates of that abode with his flaming sword, had, in a moment of obliging forgetfulness, allowed us to enter it.

The city of Caracas presents itself with a degree of majesty quite in harmony with this noble picture; it appeared to us large, clean, elegant and well built. Its population was then, I believe, estimated to amount to twenty thousand inhabitants, but it has been asserted that, since that period, a disastrous earthquake and the fury of civil wars, have destroyed that prosperity which a wise liberty and an enlightened administration can alone restore.

Désoteux had arrived there before us, as well as several officers of our army. We were, therefore, expected, and experienced from Spanish courtesy a most flattering reception: every one eagerly offered us his house, the ladies opened their lattices to bow to us from their balconies, in short, we were greeted, as romance writers



pretend, that paladins were formerly greeted in the castles in which they went to seek repose during their rambles in search of adventures.

The governor-general of the province, Don Fernand Gonsalez, having heard that I was the son of the minister of war of the King of France, had the kindness to offer me an apartment in his palace, and during our residence he received, morning and night, all our companions in arms with the greatest urbanity, and a degree of magnificence quite Castillian.

He also introduced me to the most distinguished circles of the town. We saw in these parties, men rather too grave and silent; but the ladies made ample amends, being as remarkable for the beauty of their features, the richness of their dresses, the elegance of their manners, and their talents for music and dancing, as for the vivacity of their coquetry, which displayed an amiable gaiety without offence to decency.

My travelling companions have long remembered the beauty and accomplishments of Belina Aristeguita and of the sisters Panschitta, Rossa, Theresa. For my part, I was particularly struck with the exact resemblance a lady named Raphaellita Ermenegilde, bore to the Countess Jules de Polignac.

The too famous General Miranda, whom the General Count de Valence has since accused of having been the cause of our losing the battle of Nerwinde, which was already nearly won by the

valor of the Duke de Chartres, now Duke d'Orleans, belonged to the family of the Aristeguitas. Having been proscribed by the Spanish government, he sought, for a long time, throughout Europe, to raise enemies against it, and was in secret and intimate intelligence with some Englishmen, who assisted him in fostering the seeds of a revolution in America.

We had arrived at Caracas towards the end of the carnival; so that the week we spent there was a continued series of *fêtes*, balls and concerts. We found a singular and whimsical kind of pastime in fashion at this season; it was this: ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, old and young, did not leave their houses, during the carnival, without filling their pockets with sugar-plumbs containing anis-seed in them, which they threw, by handfuls, at each other. Nobody could escape this volley which only occasioned bursts of laughter amongst those who were engaged in the conflict.

This was assuredly the sweetest and most innocent of wars; however, as no state of warfare can exist without some striking event, I will relate one to which this gave rise and which I witnessed. We were one day invited to a grand dinner at the Treasurer General's, which was graced by the presence of several reverend fathers inquisitors, who did honor to the wines and very cordially joined in the mirth prevailing amongst all the guests. During the dessert the lady of the house gave the signal for action and the sugar-plumbs

flew in all directions, and bursts of laughter resounded on all sides ; suddenly one of the inquisitors, carrying his clumsy mirth rather too far, and finding the sugar-plumbs too light, mixed a large almond with one of the handfuls he was throwing.

This cannon ball went straight up to the nose of the Duke de Laval which it slightly hit, and the Duke, who was no great admirer of monks or of jokes, returned the compliment with a twenty-four pounder, that is, with a large orange which most disrespectfully flew plump into the face of the reverend father. The Spaniards, struck with dismay and consternation, instantly rose from the table, the ladies crossed themselves, all playing was interrupted and the dinner at an end ; but the reverend father, affecting a gaiety which the expression of his face belied, quieted all apprehensions by recommencing the game which had been so seriously interrupted. I verily believe that, if we had not had in a neighboring port, on this coast, five thousand friends well armed, the father inquisitor would not have shewn himself so indulgent, and would have offered Laval to occupy, for a time, one of those dark gloomy and cool apartments of which he had a great number at his disposal.

The governor, Don Fernand Gomez, frequently mixed in our dances and concerts, but without, for a moment, forgetting his dignity ; his manners were noble, his mind well informed, his disposition humane, affable and generous. He gave

audience to all who asked him, kindly listened to their complaints, and redressed their grievances as far as it was in his power. He was perfectly well acquainted with the vices of the colonial administration, and if his authority had been greater, every thing would have soon assumed a new and prosperous aspect in these provinces; but he was not at liberty, either to oppose the intendant in his fiscal operations, or to disturb the inquisition in the severe measures which it adopted to extinguish every dawn of light, and arrest all progress in civilization.

I asked him whether the power, possessed by the inquisition, was as formidable as it was said to be. "Most assuredly," was his reply, "and to give you an idea of it, it will be sufficient to mention, that I am obliged, by my instructions, to afford assistance to this tribunal, and to place the troops, which I command, at its disposal as often as they are required, and without being allowed to enquire into the motive or object for which they are thus demanded. It must, however, be admitted, that this famed tribunal, so greatly dreaded, does not shed so much blood as formerly; it even punishes considerably less than it is thought to do, but it threatens and alarms, and, if it does not do much harm, it prevents, at least, the accomplishment of a great deal of good."

In the sequel of our conversations the Governor informed me, that Spanish America had just been delivered from a very dreadful scourge by a very

singular chance. A cruel, contagious disease, called the *leprosy of Carthagera*, and supposed to be incurable, had ravaged this continent from time immemorial. As soon as an individual was attacked with this horrible disease, which covered the skin with ulcers, destroyed the sense of feeling and led to a slow death amidst intolerable sufferings ; the unfortunate being was shunned by all, every body, with horror, avoided his approach, all pity ceased for him, friendship forsook him, and terror even stifled the voice of nature ; he had no asylum left but in the leprous institutions, infectious hospitals, where his sufferings were heightened by the spectacle of those endured by the companions of his misfortunes.

Don Fernand told me that, recently in the province of Guatemala, an old negro woman having been inhumanely driven from an habitation on account of being affected with this leprosy, and wandering in the woods, had met a savage tribe who, to her great surprise, approached her without fear and took her with them. Having reached their huts they treated her and cured her, but they detained her in bondage in order that she might not teach the secret of her cure to the Europeans.

That tribe, however, being one day attacked by a neighboring tribe, the poor negro woman, having escaped during the tumult, had found means to regain her habitation through the woods.

The greatest surprise was excited by her return and by her cure which was attributed to a miracle ; but she informed her masters that the savages had

cured her by obliging her to swallow every day, during three weeks, a lizard raw and cut in pieces. "This lizard," she added, "was very common every where."

The news of this adventure, having been quickly circulated through all the provinces of the Spanish continent, the cure, by means of the lizard, was tried, and so successfully resorted to, that leprosy had by degrees become less frequent, and the contagion had, in fact, almost entirely disappeared. The governor shewed me two lizards of this species, and I ate part of one of them. The property of this animal, is to cause at the end of a few days, such abundant perspiration and salivation, as to carry off the disease in a very short time.

After my return to France, I communicated this fact to several physicians, and I grieve to state, that they received this information with indifference, and neglected to make the necessary perquisitions respecting a remedy so efficacious, and which the governor assured me, he had seen employed with considerable success in curing soldiers who had the dropsy.

When visits or *fêtes* allowed me some leisure moments, I often conversed with a French officer, established many years since at Caracas. He confirmed all that the King's lieutenants had told me at Maracay and at Vittoria, respecting the dissatisfaction which prevailed in the country, the oppression under which the creoles labored, and the insatiable avarice of the intendant.

Ignorance is ever credulous, and I was much

entertained by being informed by this officer, that two years, before he had been sent at the head of a detachment of militia, to the banks of the Rio-Negro, where the Spaniards persisted in believing that they should find the land of Eldorado, so faithfully promised to them, by their chimerical imagination, and hitherto concealed from their view by impenetrable forests.

Strange infatuation of an administration, which strives to discover a fabulous Eldorado, whilst it can so easily create a real one in this beautiful country, by giving a little activity to labor, and a little liberty to trade.

I at last became acquainted with the famous intendant—General don Joseph d'Avalos, the tyrant of this colony. He purchased, in the name of the King, all goods coming from Europe; fixed the price he thought proper to them, and confiscated those that their owners refused to sell through his medium; he, in like manner, fixed by a rigorous tariff, the duties of exportation of colonial produce, required ten per cent. for permission to enter the port, besides a duty of five per cent. upon their growth. In addition to this, every ship laden with cacao, going to Spain, was compelled to carry a certain number of *fanegas*\* for the King, or rather for the intendant, who thus realized a most enormous profit without disbursing any thing.

\* A Spanish measure equal to  $1 \frac{2}{3}$  bushel English, but, applied to cacao, it is a weight equal to 1 cwt. avoirdupois, very nearly.—(Translator.)

The adoption of such means, to increase rapidly his fortune was odious, yet comprehensible : but what was inexplicable, was the absurd fancy of this intendant, who forbade the cultivation of cotton, in a country where it grows almost naturally. By the same caprice, whilst bullocks were so common, that a landholder without being very rich, might count thousands of them on his estates, Don Joseph forbade their exportation under the severest penalties. The result of such conduct, had been to unite all opinions respecting this governor into one, and to create an unanimous sentiment of detestation of his person.

I wished before I left Caracas, to have the satisfaction of conversing with one of the Inquisitors, who spoke a little French, and appeared less reserved than his brethren. I spoke to him of the flourishing state of the northern nations of America, which I had just witnessed ; “ How  
“ can you suffer,” said I, “ that your provinces,  
“ which have been discovered so long ago, should  
“ be so far behind hand with the English colonies in point of civilization ? Deserts intervene  
“ between your towns, and there wild beasts increase and multiply more quietly than men ;  
“ here nature lavishes all her treasures upon you,  
“ wherefore bury them ?”

“ You have yourself replied to these questions,” said the monk, “ by citing the American republics :  
“ Our provinces give us riches enough, and remain under our dominion ; if we were so simple  
“ as to allow their riches and population to in-



“crease, our colonies would soon become independent and be lost to us.”

“Admirably well calculated, most reverend father,” I replied with indignation, “I have now only one advice to give you, and that is, to cause one half of the children to be killed at their birth; you have, I believe, no other means of opposing nature, which, sooner or later will triumph over you.” There, as it may well be supposed, our conversation ended.

After having passed a week in this delightful town and valley, in favor of which nature has shewn herself so prodigal, and the administration so illiberal, and my imagination being filled with the charms of the beautiful Spanish women, the noise of their castanets, the sound of their guitars, and of their sweet voices, I started to proceed to the port of la Guayra, where I found a canoe from my vessel *le Souverain*, which was waiting for me, to conduct me along the coast to Porto-Cabello.

Bozon and Champcenetz proceeded in the same manner, as well as Matthew Dumas, who had obligingly traced out for me a detailed plan of our very curious route from Porto-Cabello to Caracas.

The port of Guayra, and that of Porto-Cabello, were, at that time, the only two into which the colonists were permitted by the formidable d’Avalos, to carry their merchandize. But the inhabitants evaded this tyrannical regulation, by proceeding at night to various little inlets, where they were met by the smugglers of Curaçao.

These smugglers were Dutchmen, and well armed; against whom the intendant used to send out a number of small vessels called *bélandres* and soldiers. It was a system of continual warfare, in which cunning and dexterity commonly triumphed over force.

This illicit traffic made the fortune of the dutch colony of Curaçao, and afforded to the creoles of the continent the means of securing a part of their property against the insatiable cupidity of Don Joseph d'Avalos.

The roadstead of Guayra is safe and commodious, and the town is defended by well constructed forts; the road to it from Caracas is rough, steep and difficult, but nevertheless much more practicable than any of the roads by which we had previously travelled in those mountains.

The canoe in which we embarked was followed by another in which were M. Linch, an officer of our staff, and Count Christern de Deux-Ponts, colonel of a regiment of four battalions which bore his name.

A fresh and favorable breeze gave us hopes of a short navigation, when, at ten leagues from Guayra, we descried a frigate bearing down upon us, without, however, being able to discover whether she was English or French. In consequence of our uncertainty on this point, we deemed it most prudent to avoid encountering her; we therefore, notwithstanding, she hailed us, kept close along shore, carefully avoiding the breakers, and soon got beyond her reach.

The canoe which was astern of us did not follow our example ; the officer commanding it held his course without fear, believing the frigate to be a friendly vessel. He was strangely surprised therefore when a ball or two, which passed close to the canoe, imperatively invited our unfortunate comrades to go on board.

It was an English frigate commanded by a young captain of the name of Nelson, who subsequently became but too celebrated by the destruction of our naval forces on the coast of Egypt, and various other brilliant victories.

My friend Lynch felt peculiarly uneasy at this critical moment, knowing that, by the English law every man born in England, is punishable with death, if taken bearing arms against her. He, therefore, earnestly entreated Count de Deux-Ponts, not to allow a syllable to escape him, which might give the officers of the frigate to understand that he had been born within the British dominions.

Nelson received these two officers with so much politeness, treated them so well and gave them such excellent cheer, that, notwithstanding their regret at being captured, they presently began to resign themselves with, good grace to their fate.

It happened that, remaining long at table and finding the wine good, they drank a little more of it than was desirable ; hoping doubtlessly to dispel the gloom on their spirits. The remedy produced its effect ; their conversation became animated, and their gaiety confiding.

Various subjects were discussed and among them England and London being mentioned, Nelson committed, I know not by what accident, one or two mistakes, relative to the names of some streets and the locality of certain buildings. Linch undertook to correct him, and a debate ensued. Suddenly Nelson said to Linch, with an archly significant look, "What amazes me, Sir, " is that you speak English and seem to know " London quite as well as I do."

"That is not at all surprising;" cried Count de Deux-Ponts, a little excited by the dinner, "for " my friend was born in London." Linch shuddered from head to foot, but Nelson, appearing not to have heard the indiscreet remark, changed the conversation and continued to treat his guests as graciously as before.

On the following day, taking his two prisoners aside, he said to them in the most obliging manner: "I cannot but feel how mortifying it must be " for a colonel of a regiment, and an officer of " the staff of the French army, to be deprived of " their liberty; perhaps on the very eve of an ex- " pedition, through an unforeseen occurrence. " On the other hand, much as I should feel ho- " nored by having captured you in the course of " an engagement, it is but little flattering to " my vanity to have taken possession of a canoe, " with two officers not actually on duty. My " intention, therefore is this: I have received or- " ders to reconnoitre, as closely as possible, your " squadron anchored in the roads of Porto-Ca-

“ bello, and I am about to execute those orders.  
“ If I am chased, and the vessel pursuing me  
“ should be *la Couronne*, I shall be obliged to  
“ carry you away with me without loss of time,  
“ because that vessel is so good a sailer that I  
“ should be unable to escape from her: any other  
“ would give me but little uneasiness, and in, the  
“ latter case, I promise to put at your disposal a  
“ little Spanish bilander which I have recently  
“ taken, with two men who will conduct you into  
“ port, and restore you to your colors.”

We shortly afterwards entered the roads; and such a visit being quite unexpected, and a part of the crews as well as officers of our fleet on shore, Nelson had time to examine and count our vessels at his leisure, and more than two hours elapsed before the frigate *Cérès*, which M. de Vaudreuil sent in pursuit of him, could get under weigh.

Nelson kept his word: Count de Deux-Ponts and Linch got quietly on board the Spanish skiff, and joined us, to our great surprise and their great joy.

On my arrival at Porto-Cabello, I had apprised our generals of the circumstance of our having seen an unknown frigate; and as soon as that frigate came in sight of the port I obtained permission to go on board the *Cérès* that was to chase and engage her. Alexander de Lameth and Bozon embarked also with me.

But before I speak of our run, I will relate an anecdote concerning my friend Linch, that will give an idea both of his singular bravery and of

the originality of his disposition. Linch, after being engaged in the campaigns of India, served, before he was employed in the army of Rochambeau, under the orders of Count d'Estaing, and distinguished himself particularly at the too memorable siege of Savannah. M. d'Estaing, at the most critical moment of that sanguinary affair, being at the head of the right column, directed Linch to carry an urgent order to the third column, which was on the left. These columns were then within grape shot of the enemy's entrenchments; and on both sides a tremendous firing was kept up. Linch, instead of passing through the centre or in the rear of the column, proceeded coolly through the shower of balls and grape shot, which the French and English were discharging at each other. It was in vain that M. d'Estaing and those who surrounded him, cried to Linch to take an other direction, he went on, executed his order, and returned by the same way; that is to say, under a vault of flying shot, and where every one expected to witness his instant destruction.

“Zounds!” said the general on seeing him return unhurt, “the devil must be in you, surely: “why did you choose such a road as that, in “which you might have expected to perish a “thousand times over?” “Because it was the “shortest” answered Linch. Having uttered these few words, he went with equal coolness and joined the group that was most ardently engaged in storming the place.

He was afterwards promoted to the rank of

lieutenant-general, and commanded our infantry in the first engagement we had with the Prussians on the heights of Valmy.

To return to the *Cérès*: it was in vain that we made all sail in chase of Nelson; he eluded our pursuit. Being compelled to relinquish our fruitless attempt and finding ourselves close to Curaçao, we were desirous of refreshing ourselves there; but being carried away by a rapid current, we struck on a sand-bank at the entrance of the harbour. Some Dutch vessels however came to our assistance and got us off.

We remained two days on the island. I shall say but little of it, as it offers nothing that can satisfy curiosity. It is by nature a barren rock, but Dutch industry has rendered it a rich colony. The illicit traffic carried on between it and the continent, had the effect of conveying to it as much of their treasures as the Spanish colonists could contrive to save from the rapacious vigilance of their tyrannical administration.

There we learned that our wishes were about to be fulfilled, and that the naval forces of M. d'Estaing were at length going to leave Cadiz and join us as well as the Spanish fleet from Havanah. We hastened therefore to return to Porto-Cabello.

I found there letters from France: my father announced to me that the King had appointed me colonel commanding the regiment of *Belzunce-dragoons*, which, from that moment, assumed the name of *Ségur*. At any other time this intelli-

gence would have given me the liveliest satisfaction, but on the eve of an expedition for the conquest of Jamaica I could not endure the idea of quitting the service I was engaged in, and therefore resolved to remain with the army to which I was then attached.

The apprehension entertained by the English ministry of the consequences of the speedy junction of such formidable forces, and of the effect of a vast combination which was about to expose the British possessions in the Antilles to the most imminent risk, was indubitably one of the most powerful motives that induced them to conclude the peace, and acknowledge the independence of America.

A few days after our return to Porto-Cabello, the frigate *Andromaque* brought us from France the intelligence that this glorious peace was ratified. Shortly afterwards we sailed for Cape Français in St. Domingo, M. de Vaudreuil taking me with him on board the flag ship Northumberland.

We sailed on the 3d of April, 1783. On quitting that fine continent I was impressed with the belief that the oppression of which it was the victim would not be lasting, but that the season of its emancipation and prosperity would arrive. The event has justified my anticipation; the republic of Columbia has established itself in the midst of storms: courage has triumphed over force, and patience has surmounted every obstacle.



May this infant republic enjoy internally, after its successes, the happiness that can only arise from order and respect for laws ! May she, while following the example of the United States, always remember that liberty has every where more to fear from the passions of its votaries, than from the attacks of its enemies !

After we had passed Curaçao, happening to mention, in conversation with M. de Vaudreuil, the regret I should experience at visiting the northern coast of St. Domingo without having had an opportunity of seeing my own habitation, which was situated in the western part of the island, near Port-au-Prince, he most obligingly placed at my disposal the frigate *Amazon*, commanded by M. de Gaston, who received orders to put me ashore in the port of Jacquemel, and afterwards, doubling Cape Tiburon, to join him again.

I immediately got on board that vessel, with M. Berthier, afterwards Prince de Neufchatel, who wished to accompany me : and, with the assistance of a favorable wind, we made the southern coast of Saint-Domingo in eleven days.

As we sailed along the shore of the Spanish part of the island, it appeared as wild and uncultivated as when discovered by Columbus. We could barely discern, at immense intervals from each other, some miserable villages, and a few sugar plantations ; the rest consisted of nothing but thick forests and deserted savannas.

On a sudden the scene changed : perceiving

fine cities, rich villages, good roads, elegant houses, cultivated fields ; in short, the whole face of nature embellished by the various improvements derivable from art and an able administration ; we had no occasion to consult the map, in order to know that we had got beyond the Spanish frontiers, and that, on entering the French territory, we had, as it were, in an instant overleaped the two or three centuries by which light is separated from darkness, and civilization from barbarism.

We soon reached the port of Jacquemel, when the captain of the *Amazon* bid me adieu, and sailed for the Cape to join M. de Vaudreuil.

Without stopping at Jacquemel, M. Berthier and I purchased horses, and, travelling night and day, did not rest till we reached Leogane ; from thence we proceeded to Port-au-Prince, where we remained but a single day, which I devoted to the purpose of examining that fine city, then one of the richest of the new world.

The port was full of vessels, commerce was in the highest state of activity, and it would be difficult to describe the luxury that prevailed there. It was the last brilliant æra of that opulent colony, or rather of that kingdom which, by its valuable productions, gave annually to France an advantage of sixty millions of francs in the balance of her trade.

I was far from anticipating, while I admired that flourishing city, one of the ornaments of our triumphant monarchy, that, in a few years, it

would, after having been made the grave of many thousands of Frenchmen, become the capital of a republic of negroes.

At a short distance from Port-au-Prince, being invited to breakfast at the habitation of M. Blanchard, the uncle of a commissary of the army of M. de Rochambeau, who had accompanied me in this excursion, I met the superintendent of my plantation, M. Seigneuret, who was not a little surprised to find, seated by his side, his principal, whom he believed to be then in France.

His carriage and horses, or rather mine, conveyed me, in less than two hours, to my own habitation, situated in the middle of the *plaine du cul-de-sac*, at a place called *la Croix des bouquets*.

A servant had proceeded in all haste to announce my arrival ; so that, as soon as I entered my plantation, I found myself surrounded by a population of slaves of both sexes, of all ages, and of every possible diversity of cast and color.

These poor people threw themselves on their knees before me, and vociferously proclaimed their surprise and satisfaction on beholding their master. Those oppressed, degraded, and suffering beings somewhat resemble, in this respect, the subjects of the absolute monarchies of Asia : they do not, however, say “ *if the king*,” but “ *if the master knew it!*” hoping that their grievances, which arise from an inferior source, would find a remedy in a higher quarter.

Fate had decreed that, in the course of two short campaigns, the most varied and contrasting

scenes should be presented to my observation. In the Azores I had seen the wreck of the Atlantis, traces of the middle ages, monastic ignorance, the chivalrous manners and religious gallantry of the thirteenth century. In the United States, reason, simplicity, bravery, activity, and the republican virtues. Within the torrid zone and in the Spanish settlements, the inexhaustible riches of all-bountiful nature, with all the miseries attendant on an ignorant, rapacious, arbitrary and intolerant government. Lastly, being arrived at Saint-Domingo, where all things felt the influence of the well directed efforts of a fostering government, as well as of popular activity and intelligence, I, nevertheless, found myself in my large house like a pacha in his harem ; surrounded by slaves who only waited for a sign to obey all my caprices, and whose life or death, happiness or misery, depended upon an act of my will.

I still shudder when I recollect, that two days before my arrival, an old negress had been confined in an oven, and committed to the flames. It is true, she had had the atrocity to poison several children ; but still, she perished without a trial. Yet it is true that laws existed ; but where slavery prevails, complaint is unheard, and the law powerless.

St. Domingo presented at that time, to the eye of an observer, two very opposite spectacles : the island, every where cultivated with care, resembled a magnificent garden, intersected by well kept roads and numerous foot-paths, bounded

by hedges of lemon and orange-trees. At every step, round the fields of sugar-canés and the savannas, in which numerous flocks were feeding, were to be seen in various forms the elegant residences of the rich proprietors of those plantations. The roads were constantly covered with vehicles, transporting merchandize to the ports, and with a multitude of elegant carriages conveying the voluptuous colonists from one habitation to another.

All were continually engaged in visiting and making parties. It was an endless succession *fetes*, balls, concerts and gaming; by which gaming it frequently happened, that the largest fortunes were lost in a few hours. The rich plains of this colony resembled in some sort by the luxury and ever varying scenes they exhibited, those great capitals composed of numerous districts, which commerce and general business, intrigues and pleasures, keep in a perpetual state of agitation.

Such was the picture exhibited to my observation by the activity, the voluptuous habits and the prosperity of the white population. But quitting this vortex of a seductive world, and entering the fields of my habitation, what a melancholy and different prospect presented itself! There I beheld my unfortunate negroes, with no other dress than a pair of drawers, constantly exposed to a scorching sun, and a temperature of 28° or 30° of Reaumur, stooping from morning till night over the indurated soil, forced to dig it without

intermission, admonished if they discontinued their work for a moment, by the whip of the superintendents, who lacerated their skin with an unsparing hand, and almost envying the condition of the oxen and horses, whose only labor consisted in carrying the canes to the mill.

But let us dismiss these melancholy reflections; the wise demanded in vain that so intolerable an order of things should be gradually reformed, and that the prevailing abuses should be mitigated, in order to avoid the danger of commotions; reason will always speak too feebly, and the passions too loudly. At the moment when the cry of liberty, raised in America, was re-echoed in Europe, our first assembly caught an indistinct view of the proper course pointed out by circumstances, but failed to pursue it.

Vainly did Barnave, Alexander de Lameth, Duport and other deputies, propose to effect salutary reforms, and to connect the interests of the free population of color with our own, by conceding to them their civil rights; their suggestions were unheeded. The other assemblies, yielding impetuously to the most immoderate passion, suddenly, and in an unguarded and unqualified manner, proclaimed the emancipation of the blacks; the colonists taking the alarm, put themselves in a state of defence; the negroes, thirsting for vengeance, flew to arms, and St. Domingo, the land so long watered by their tears was, through their ferocious resentment, deluged with French blood. St. Domingo no longer exists for us;

black Hayti has taken its place ; in vain did Napoleon attempt its reconquest.

May those governments who still possess islands in this quarter of the globe, become persuaded of this truth, that a judicious reform can alone avert or retard revolutions ! The colonial system must be changed ; and perhaps the period may arrive when, like ancient Rome and Greece, Europe will perceive that colonies cannot be long retained otherwise than as allies ; as the offspring of the mother country, and not as her servants.

After having made myself completely acquainted with the state of my plantation and the nature of the labor performed upon it, I made some regulations with the view of ameliorating the condition of my slaves. I extended their hours of rest, augmented the portion of ground they were permitted to cultivate for their own account, and enjoined moderation on the part of the superintendents in their chastisements. In return, I received the blessings of all ; and this recollection is still a source of satisfaction and pleasure.

M. Berthier presented me with four pleasing pictures, in which he had represented different views of my plantation, with the various kinds of labor performed there, my reception by the negroes, their dances and other pastimes ; these are the only vestiges I now retain of that valuable property.

At length, having received intimation from M. de Vaudreuil that he was about to return immediately to France. I forthwith proceeded to

the Cape, travelling very agreeably from one plantation to another.

At each habitation I experienced, according to custom, the most obliging hospitality, every where meeting with agreeable conversation, commodious lodging, an excellent table, carriage and slaves at my disposal.

I perceived with pleasure that many of the colonists were entitled, by their humanity, to the praises bestowed perhaps too exclusively upon two or three planters ; and that it might therefore be said of their slaves, that they were as happy as the negroes of Blin or Galiffet.

I shall enter into no details respecting the town of the Cape ; few of our great cities equal it in prosperity and magnificence. Our fleet sailed on the 30th April, 1783. The only contrariety we experienced was that of being occasionally becalmed in the latitude of the Azores. At the end of forty-nine days we found ourselves close to the shores of France, and there we narrowly escaped being lost.

The wind was so fresh that we were running at the rate of twelve knots an hour, that is to say, four leagues. Our mariners were deceived in their calculations, and, as the lead did not indicate the proximity of the coast they were expecting to approach, they concluded that the currents had carried us into the channel.

M. de Vaudreuil, however, prudently directed us to stand off to sea during the night, and the event proved that he was right, for one morning,



at break of day, I heard M. de Medine, the captain of our ship exclaim : " I see breakers through the mist."

M. de l'Aiguille, an officer of superior merit, but who displayed sometimes too much of the confidence of youth, replied with a smile : " Those breakers are no where but in your glass."

" Young man," said our old captain with a tone of anger, " you are major-general to the squadron and may give it the orders you think proper ; but, for my part, I know what I have to do, and although the Marquis de Vaudreuil is on board, it is I who answer for the safety of my ship. I shall, therefore, give orders to tack, for there is not a moment to be lost."

He accordingly gave that order and, during the manœuvre, the fog having suddenly cleared away, we perceived, at about two hundred yards from us, the rocks *des Saintes* against which the waves dashing with fury, threw up columns of foaming waters to a prodigious height. Against those rocks the whole of our fleet would inevitably have perished. Fortunately the whole squadron imitated the movement of our vessel, and all danger being then over, we arrived in three hours in Brest harbor.

Having landed, I received the intelligence of the nomination of my father to the dignity of *Maréchal de France*. I also learned that I should still find him a minister, at which I could not help feeling rather surprised, for he had then been upwards

of two years in that post, and I was well aware that, of all human careers, that of a minister is the shortest, the most precarious, and the most uncertain.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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